The Experiences of Postsecondary Students with Disabilities Utilizing One Stop Student Services: A Grounded Theory Approach

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The Experiences of Postsecondary Students with Disabilities Utilizing 
One Stop Student Services: A Grounded Theory Approach

A Dissertation by

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The Experiences of Postsecondary Students with Disabilities Utilizing One Stop Student Services: A Grounded Theory Approach

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. To my parents, Armando Mario Noe and Ligia Maria Noe, thank you for all of your sacrifices and for supporting me through all levels of my education. To my brother, Chris Albert Noe, thank you for teaching me that humor is the universal love language. Your kindness is admirable, and the world is better because you’re in it. To my nephews, Jeremy and Matthew, thank you for the reminder that the future is in capable hands. Your laughter, smiles, and hugs keep me grounded.
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At my core, I am a deeply social person. There is no conceivable reality where drafting this dissertation was possible without the support of the people in my corner. I am blessed to be part of a rich community of cohort-mates, friends, family, colleagues, and peers. You all mean the world to me.

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Finally, to the participants of this study, thank you for sharing your stories with me. I wish you all happiness and success as you continue your journeys through this world.
ABSTRACT

The Experiences of Postsecondary Students with Disabilities Utilizing One Stop Student Services: A Grounded Theory Approach

by Ivan Enzo Noe

The number of students with disabilities attending postsecondary institutions of higher education continues to rise. With it, it is necessary to understand better how they experience their institution beyond curricular spaces. Presently, there exists a gap in the knowledge of how these students experience co-curricular support, including assistance with enrollment services through one stops. This study sought to understand the multiple ways in which this population of students experiences the one stop at one of three four-year public research universities in California. This qualitative research study utilized the constructivist grounded theory methodology and methods to aid in the emergence of the various dimensions in which students with disabilities experience their institution’s one stop. Through focused semi-structured interviews, these shared perspectives demonstrated that although one stops provide some support to postsecondary students with disabilities, they are not being utilized consistently with their purpose. This study identified that the origin of this inconsistency may be due to one of multiple issues, including a misunderstanding of communication between the one stop and this population of students. These incongruencies seemingly push postsecondary students with disabilities to seek support elsewhere.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The pursuit of higher education for students with disabilities is a right guaranteed and protected through legislation, most notably Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; Rehabilitation Act of 1973). To qualify for federal financial support, postsecondary institutions must comply with the regulations set forth by these laws. Scholarly research within the field of higher education highlighted that although institutions take measures toward satisfying these requirements, varying levels of support are ultimately reported by students with disabilities (Aquino et al., 2017).

Approximately 19% of college students disclose their disability status to their postsecondary institution (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). This statistic, referenced across multiple studies focusing on students with disabilities, discounts the significantly more extensive group of students who elect not to disclose their disability status to their college or university (Brown & Broido, 2020; Hadley, 2011). Research contributions of students who disclose their disability status, however, paved the way for identifying opportunities for improved services that all students with disabilities, regardless of disclosure, may benefit (Grimes et al., 2020). Overall, the academic and social experiences of this population of students are reported as less favorable when compared to their peers without disabilities (Hadley, 2011).

In conjunction with the rise in enrollment of postsecondary students with disabilities (Yeager et al., 2022) and following the inception of the disability rights movement in the 1970s (Kudlick, 2003), scholarly research on this population has continuously contributed to developing relevant literature necessary to understand the potential academic success of
postsecondary students with disabilities (Daffner et al., 2022). It is generally understood that students with disabilities commonly report facing an unwelcoming environment when enrolling in postsecondary institutions (Brown & Broido, 2020; Shalish, 2017). This occurs at multiple levels, including individual (Barnard-Brak et al., 2010), institutional (Aquino et al., 2017; Baker et al., 2012), systemic (Squires et al., 2018), and social-cultural (Yeager, 2016).

One area of particular importance, co-curricular student services, merits significant scholarly research (Harbour, 2009; Kimball et al., 2016a). Presently, the experiences of students with disabilities in higher education utilizing these non-academic services are seemingly absent from the literature (Lalor et al., 2020; Vaccaro, 2015). Existing literature, however, is rich with a strong, foundational understanding of the transition these students experience from secondary to postsecondary educational settings (Barnard-Brak et al., 2010) and their experiences with requesting, receiving, and utilizing academic accommodations (Toutain, 2019). Within the larger scope of co-curricular student services, an area needing student experience research is that of one stops service centers that aid with enrollment management needs.

In this dissertation, I explored the role of one stops from the perspectives of postsecondary students with disabilities, “a population consistently overlooked and underrepresented in higher education” (Saia, 2022, p. 19). Brown and Broido (2020) expanded upon the need for this research as they concluded that “despite strong evidence of the importance of out-of-class engagement for the general student population, co-curricular aspects of campus life for disabled students have received considerably less attention” (p. 242). Through a constructivist grounded theory study, I collected empirical data on the experiences of this population utilizing one stop services.
The remainder of this introductory Chapter establishes background information, including an explanation of co-curricular student services and an introduction of integrated student services framed through the lens of postsecondary students with disabilities. It continues with definitions of specific terminology needed to ensure comprehension of the completed study. The statement of the problem is addressed next, followed by the rationale that drove this study’s purpose. It concludes with the significance of the research and a brief synopsis of the following Chapters.

**Background, Context, and Theoretical Framework**

In the following section, I expand upon the necessary background, context, and theoretical framework of the study. In order to clarify the perceived importance of the relationship between postsecondary students with disabilities and their institution’s one stop, a foundational understanding of co-curricular and integrated student services is provided. Additionally, definitions are included for non-standardized terms to clarify the direction of the study as well.

**Co-curricular Student Services**

Boyd et al. (2022) differentiated the co-curricular experiences of postsecondary education from their curricular or academic counterpart by highlighting the emphasis the former establishes on general education. Elements that determine co-curricular experiences from curricular include out-of-the-classroom learning opportunities that foster holistic development and self-reflection (Bruni-Bossio & Delbaere, 2021). This dissertation makes the stand that navigation through enrollment services is a co-curricular expectation of all postsecondary students. One stop centers are inclusive of representation of services on behalf of functional (e.g., registrar, financial aid, admissions) and subsidiary (e.g., housing and resident life, student support services) departments.
that make up a unique co-curricular hub for students (Graves, 2020). In consideration of the breadth of assistance possible to all students, transactions will vary contingent upon the individual needs of each visit. However, the exact services generally remain universal to all (Graves, 2020). Course registration, for example, must be completed by all students every academic term to maintain active student standing. All students are assessed tuition and fees that must be paid (either directly by the student or indirectly through the support of federal financial aid and scholarships).

However, these co-curricular student services do not seem to be universally defined across institutions of higher education. One possible explanation for this deviation is a heavy emphasis on ‘voluntary’ when co-curricular is defined through a student affairs lens. Postsecondary students are free to elect to participate in activities and join clubs and organizations beyond the scope of academic affairs that may supplement their curricular experiences. Because of this, student services, which by definition are not curricular as they are experienced outside of the classroom, exist in a liminal space. These services (a) are co-curricular activities; (b) are critical to all postsecondary students; (c) require an understanding of how students navigate student services; (d) involve one stop models that are inherently unique in how they integrate these services in a way that is supportive of student persistence; (e) are not well understood, that is, little is known about one stops, let alone how postsecondary students navigate them; and (f) if we believe that co-curricular expectations are critical, and we do not know how postsecondary students utilize them, then a study is merited so we can better understand, better support, and evaluate progress.
Integrated Student Services

Developed as a critique to the current dominant siloed model, which situates enrollment management servicing departments in isolation from related offices within a postsecondary setting, one stops instead create a centralized location where students can seek multiple university-wide services without having to traverse across different physical spaces (Komives et al., 2003). This one stop model addresses the concern of a phenomenon identified as “the run-around,” which Altieri (2019) defined as the often-inefficient processes by which students are referred to multiple departments and representatives when attempting to transact their student service-related business. Implementing a one stop model is a decision made in light of the evolving needs of contemporary postsecondary students, deviating from a process-centered to a more student-centered approach that maintains and increases student satisfaction (The Advisory Board Company, 2009). From the perspective of strategic enrollment management, one stops are also adopted to strengthen enrollment at an institution (Kerlin, 2008).

There is no standardized blueprint for designing a one stop center that supports postsecondary students seeking enrollment management support (Graves, 2020). This can be best understood as the direct consequence of the varied nature of strategic enrollment plans, where recommendations and best practices are driven to address the highly specialized needs of the campus's unique culture (Kerlin, 2008). Within this spectrum of model variance is a specific physical structure, as well as supported functional and subsidiary unities that differ according to the institution's needs (Altieri, 2019). This study was designed on the understanding that one stops may sometimes include different student service departments but defined relevant departments that represent one stops as admissions, financial aid, the office of the Registrar, and student business services or the office of the Bursar (Bouman et al., 2006).
One stops are emblematic of integrated student services emphasizing the centralization of departments previously siloed in separate offices (Altieri, 2019). An institution’s decision to embrace a one stop service model assists in improving the way students experience their institutions in several ways. This service structure contributes towards improving the overall campus climate. According to Zehner (2018), several factors that exist inside and outside of the classroom contribute to shaping each student’s perception of what is known as the campus climate. Students who experienced their institution favorably reported a more significant commitment to their campus, leading to increased academic success. The relationship between student service factors that influence campus climate centers around student interactions with university staff (Stodden et al., 2011).

Historically, the prevalence of one stops within postsecondary institutions increased to address student satisfaction concerns with obtaining support (Graves, 2020). According to Burnett and Oblinger (2002), when siloed as separate departments, student enrollment services, including the offices of undergraduate admissions, financial aid, the Registrar, and student business services, are staffed by specialists who identify as subject matter experts within their respective units. A service model supportive of specialist support can negate the complex interconnectedness affixed between these offices. Each department operates under its specific guidelines and as a direct result of the need to ensure compliance with the United States Department of Education’s strict regulations. Institutions that often separate these units unnecessarily burden students who must physically seek support at multiple sites to resolve issues.
Definitions

Although some semblance of terminology standardization exists across student affairs and enrollment management, several concepts lack universality; therefore, several specific terms will be defined in the following section. These definitions are consistent with best practices published by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO).

Postsecondary Institutions Serving Students with Disabilities

Postsecondary is defined as the level of education immediately following the successful completion of secondary education, more commonly referred to as high school (Hossler, 2015). Postsecondary education is synonymous with tertiary education and is more universally used outside the United States. As this study focused solely on institutions of higher education within the United States, postsecondary will be used exclusively when describing references to colleges and universities. Institutions can be further defined by governance and funding (public, private, or for-profit), degree programs (certificate, associate, undergraduate, graduate, and professional), student population, and curricula (Renn & Patton, 2017). This study only accepted participants seeking undergraduate or graduate degrees from four-year public colleges or universities.

The term student will refer to any individual currently enrolled in a postsecondary institution. Students are considered to be enrolled in either a full-time or part-time capacity, contingent upon the number of credit hours of units carried within a singular academic term. Active enrollment in this study referred to an individual not currently on an approved leave from their institution, whether voluntary or involuntary. This study accepted responses regardless of student time-status designations.
The definition of disability is deeply rooted in a long, controversial history carrying significant weight. Goodley (2017) defined disability as “a sociocultural phenomenon and a personal embodied, physiological or psychological one” (p. 1). Disability is more than a component of one’s identity but also a part of life and, more importantly, of the human condition. There are multiple perspectives on disability that span a broad and diverse spectrum (Reardon et al., 2021). Although this study was framed around the social model of disability (Thornton, 2011), a concept that will be further developed in a later section, any self-identified facet of disability was accepted.

Finally, I define **postsecondary students with disabilities** as actively enrolled college or university students who identify as having one or more disabilities pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees at a public or private four-year institution. Person-first language, coined as a method of recognizing “humanity and diversity beyond the narrow confines of labor and consumption” (Goodley, 2017, p. 13), was used exclusively as a means of respecting participants and prioritizing their human abilities in the presence of disability. This study was open to students who have disclosed their disabilities with their institutions as well as those who have not. However, because participant recruitment was conducted through institutional support services that only identified students who self-reported and because snowball sampling techniques did not assist in the recruitment of individuals who have not self-disclosed their disabilities to their institutions, only those who have disclosed their disabilities were included. This study was an opportunity for all students who identify as having a disability to participate and have their experiences honored. The opportunity for future studies to incorporate additional perspectives will be addressed in Chapter 5.
Strategic Enrollment Management

Strategic enrollment management seeks to evaluate and improve the enrollment performance of higher education institutions (Hossler, 2014). It works to functionally utilize and exercise cross-campus resources to reimagine the fundamental critical players involved in the student recruitment process. The presence of marketing, public relations, and academic affairs in institution-wide decision-making, including departments involved in “shaping” incoming classes through data-driven research, is accentuated and differentiates strategic enrollment management from its predecessor, enrollment management (Maxwell, 2017). Additionally, Kerlin (2008) described enrollment management’s goal of seeking and maintaining optimum enrollment as uniquely specific to an institution’s academic context. In this dissertation, I define enrollment management as the internal and external systems that address the quantity, quality, and composition of an institution’s student body while simultaneously addressing net tuition revenue (Baker et al., 2012).

Under the lens of strategic enrollment management, departments previously siloed work collaboratively and strategically to deliver quality service that leads to student success and retention (Hossler & Bontrager, 2014). According to Hossler and Bontrager (2014), this partnership ultimately remains in place so that enrollment decisions are made in parallel with the definitive goal of each student’s graduation. It also ensures that evolving enrollment targets for the institution are met, as failure to do so can be disastrous for the institution. A strong understanding of strategic enrollment management is necessary to establish a fundamental awareness of the rationale behind all decisions that lead to student recruitment, retention, and ultimate completion. This dissertation used two sub-terms within strategic enrollment management: retention and persistence.
Retention

Retention’s importance within strategic enrollment management is best understood when stated simply: every retained student represents one less recruited student for future academic years (Shapiro & Dundar, 2015). This study defines retention as an institution’s ability to keep students enrolled from their entry term of study through every subsequent term until the completion of their academic program (Hirschy, 2014). Through the assessment of internal and external factors impacting the retention of students, including minoritized communities of students such as postsecondary students with disabilities, strategic enrollment managers collaborate with cross-campus stakeholders to identify aspects of student success that may be improved.

Persistence

Unlike retention, which is an institutional experience, persistence is experienced by students. Several factors contribute to students' social and academic integration into their campus culture, including individual characteristics, external forces, and institutional attributes (Griffen & Tevis, 2017). The continuous act of a postsecondary student making progress toward degree completion is known as persistence. Within strategic enrollment management, it serves as a measure of success (Hirschy, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Little is known about the development and implementation of one stops beyond self-reported contributions by members of enrollment management professional organizations (Altieri, 2019; Ousley, 2006) and limited empirical studies (Perry, 2023). What is known, however, is that strategic enrollment management trends continue to support the critical need for student services to seek out innovative methods of recruitment and retention of postsecondary
students (Hossler & Bontrager, 2014). These services are designed with the central goal of being accessible to a general population of students (Felix & Lerner, 2017). Historically, the needs of students with disabilities beyond academic accommodations are only incorporated as a means of maintaining strict compliance with federal laws and regulations (Grimes et al., 2020; Harbour, 2009). Because postsecondary students with disabilities are an increasing presence on college and university campuses, how this particular population is impacted by the evolving service models required significant research (Fleming et al., 2017). Attempting to understand how postsecondary students with disabilities experience one stops addressed this need.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study aimed to explore the experiences of postsecondary students utilizing one stops. This study was composed of the voices of students who attend various four-year public universities in California that utilize a one stop model to deliver enrollment management services. The decision to include a wide range of institutions was intentional and addressed the primary concern of obtaining an appropriate sample size necessary to conduct a traditional constructivist grounded theory study, as discussed further in Chapter 3. Additionally, this study addressed the historical practice of excluding the experiences of postsecondary students from the literature. Students with disabilities are considered a marginalized community that is notably absent in literature on postsecondary student experiences, with recent statistics identifying one in five postsecondary students as having a disability (Daffner et al., 2020).

Empirical studies that focus on one stops in postsecondary settings are few and far between (Perry, 2022). Institutions of higher education are consistently pursuing methods towards improving the student experience to increase matriculation to meet the rising operational costs (Seifert et al., 2017). There is merit in additional work that ultimately contributes towards a
better understanding of a one stop’s potential to impact the student experience. The value of this study went beyond transferability, a hallmark of qualitative research. Specifically, this study generated a grounded theory on how this population’s post-secondary experience was enhanced or reduced through their utilization of services offered by a department that can be considered essential.

Prior research conducted at post-secondary institutions has historically attempted to explore the co-curricular experiences of traditional college students. These studies focused less on how institutional-wide practices and procedures impact marginalized communities and more on how universities serve a generic population (Schroeder et al., 2021). This study addressed how a marginalized population utilized a one stop, but college campuses are amalgamations of multiple marginalized groups. Study design may be transferrable to identify how other groups perceive one stops and will be further elaborated upon in Chapter 5.

**Framework of the Study and Research Questions**

This dissertation was conducted using constructivist grounded theory, as will be described in detail in Chapter 3 (Charmaz, 2014). Two factors contributed to the decision to employ this methodology. First, the study addressed an area of inquiry where little is relatively known through an exploratory approach in which knowledge was obtained from those directly impacted (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Second, and in support of the decision to utilize the constructivist approach to grounded theory, my role as the researcher with direct experience utilizing and providing services through a one stop played a role in constructing and analyzing the final proposed theory (Birks & Mills, 2016; Charmaz, 2014).

The theoretical framework that provided the foundation for this study is the social model of disability. Created in direct response to the medical model of disability, which defines
disability as a physical or mental abnormality within an individual that promotes rehabilitation as a form of treatment (Siebers, 2011), the social model of disability differentiates between the impairment and the social and environmental barriers that act to disable individuals (Goodley, 2017). Disability Service offices within the United States have relied upon the medical model when identifying and providing individual accommodations to students with disabilities seeking support (Squires et al., 2018). As these departments historically operate to provide support focused on legislative mandates, official written documentation by medical professionals is often required to ensure the validity of each request (Harbour, 2009). These records are obtained through prescriptive testing practices in which professionals evaluate a student’s ability to perform academically. An additional model for identifying eligibility includes a team approach by school professionals, including school psychologists, teachers, administrators, and parents, as determined through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, (IDEA 2004). Embracing the medical model inherently denies additional support and accommodations to those who choose not to disclose their disability identity to their institutions.

In contrast, the social model of disability promotes the “eradication of disabling social, economic, political, cultural, relational, and psychological barriers” (Goodley, 2017, p. 11) for all students. This study identified several elements of the social model of disability when defining a theoretical framework to guide data analysis. First, as previously stated, the focus of disability should be placed on society, not on the impairment (Siebers, 2011). Within this concept, the social model “considers impairment as a part of normal human variation and shifts the focus to societal factors such as inaccessible environments and discrimination” (Brown & Broido, 2020, p. 240). Second, this model addresses concerns of disablism, or discrimination based on disability, over circumstances surrounding individual impairments (Goodley, 2017).
The notion of moving beyond the individual is also emphasized through deficiencies and
tragedies experienced by people with disabilities. It accentuates social change and revolution in
place of individual adjustment, underscoring the positive benefits of activism in place of
medicalization (Oliver, 1990). Finally, it brings to light the need for people with disabilities to
substantiate their experiences and share what they believe to be best, removing power from
professionals who seek to draw these conclusions on their behalf (Davis, 2002).

Beyond the identification of the elements that contribute to the definition of the social
model of disability, there are proposed benefits that underscore its relevance in the advancement
of people with disabilities. For example, the conscious act of distinguishing between social
barriers and individual impairments exists as identifiable changes that seek to benefit larger
groups of individuals are identified (Goodley, 2017). Simultaneously, this model unifies
individuals with impairments into one large community of individuals with disabilities, a group
that can gain political power through shared values and a sense of pride (Shakespeare, 2013).
Finally, pursuing the integration of disability into self, beyond impairment, continuously shifts
the focus on how external factors require amelioration, further empowering individuals to move
beyond a sense of personal tragedy regarding their impairments (Davis, 2002). It is worth noting,
however, that the social model of disability is not without its limitations.

Within the academy, the social model of disability is not absent of criticism. Shakespeare
(2013) identified four weaknesses within the social model of disability. The decision to shift
attention away from individual impairments can be interpreted as rejecting support through
rehabilitation and medical prevention. The social model also assumes that people with
disabilities are oppressed rather than existing within a reality of oppression. Additionally, it can
be difficult for people with disabilities to understand the difference between the disablement of
external barriers and physical and mental impairments, and differentiating between the two can lead to the simplification of their complex union. The final weakness is the notion that an environment free of barriers is closer to a utopia than a reality. Inaccessible physical locations within the natural world may always exist, whether or not an individual firmly subscribes to the social model of disability.

Upon reflection of the balance between the positive and negative aspects of the social model of disability, it remained best suited for this study. Unlike the natural world, postsecondary institutions can be modified. Additionally, students with disabilities make up one of many communities of diverse students on a college or university campus. Notwithstanding the possibility that undemocratic barriers await these students beyond graduation, existing within a temporary environment that provides an obstruction-free experience seeks to empower and support fundamental growth within. Moreover, Goodley (2017) shared that “disability provokes deep questions about what it means to be a human being in a contemporary world that is shaped by inequalities” (p. 20), which supports a study that follows the social model when attempting to address these questions.

Research Questions

The study’s purpose was addressed through a primary research question and a series of secondary questions. These questions were:

- In what ways are one stops experienced by postsecondary students with disabilities?
  - In what ways, if any, do one stops support the retention of postsecondary students with disabilities?
  - In what ways, if any, do postsecondary students with disabilities experience the structural design of their institution’s one stop?
In what ways, if any, does the location of the one stop influence how postsecondary students with disabilities navigate student services?

In what ways, if any, does the combination of supported departmental representation influence both the curricular and co-curricular successes of postsecondary students with disabilities?

These questions evoked the spirit of not only the social model of disability that served as a framework for the study but to the defining tenets of disability studies as a whole. As Goodley (2017) emphasized, Disability Studies favors research that produces a social theory that challenges dominant models of disability in which something new that captures and articulates the possibilities of people with disability is discovered. Utilizing a grounded theory approach and collecting data directly from students with disabilities about a novel experience absent from the literature ensured this requirement was met. Furthermore, Disability Studies seeks to understand better the constructed nature of concepts such as ‘normal’ (Davis, 2002). The decision made to emphasize a constructivist approach to the research methodology allowed exploration of this concept as it related to one stops through the lens of postsecondary students with disabilities.

**Significance of the Study**

This dissertation’s significance was the elevation of the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities through a deeper understanding of how they perceived support received from a one stop. As the population of students with disabilities in college and university settings continues to grow, so does the need to understand the holistic experience of these students. The literature on postsecondary students with disabilities currently addresses several facets of their experience in great detail, including the utilization of accommodations and perceived stigma
from peers and faculty. Yet, there exists a gap in the literature that addresses how these students utilize enrollment services.

Additionally, there appears to be a resurgence in popularity of the one stop model (Altieri, 2019). If these models are to continue to address enrollment management concerns in postsecondary settings, including large-scale changes to improve retention and persistence, it is imperative to grow the knowledge base of the impact of its services on student populations. The contribution of empirical findings regarding one stops from this study assisted in increasing awareness of the lack of scholarly work to inspire further studies.

Finally, this study privileged the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities in a novel area of research. Research that exists to understand better the experiences of individuals from minoritized communities often reaches students with disabilities after the experiences of students from other groups are explored (Daffner et al., 2020). This dissertation placed students with disabilities at the forefront of future potential research.

**Summary**

It is known through various studies on postsecondary students with disabilities that two of the most critical elements contributing to academic success are empowering students with disabilities and educating others about disabilities (Brown & Broido, 2020). The study was deeply rooted in seeking to address both. The existing gap within the literature on students with disabilities and their utilization of one stop services is perhaps as niche of an area of study as possible. But as Zinn (2009) eloquently stated, researchers “don’t have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world” (p. 13). In the spirit of this statement, this study symbolized one of many small acts toward humanizing higher education for all students.
In the Chapter that follows, this dissertation synthesized relevant academic literature and established a deeper understanding of the present state of postsecondary students with disabilities and one stops. Next, an overview of the methodology and methods that guided this study, constructivist grounded theory, are explored in explicit detail. The following Chapter presents findings obtained through semi-focused interviews of recruited participants. These findings are arranged by six themes identified through data analysis. This dissertation concludes with a final discussion on the importance of the findings of this study.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This Chapter synthesized the literature of several related areas of inquiry to develop an understanding of the topical foundations of the completed study. These topics included enrollment management and strategic enrollment management, one stops, and the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities. To begin, an introduction is provided regarding the rationale behind the literature review conducted. This is followed by a review of the study’s theoretical framework, the social model of disability. Next, a comprehensive review of the literature is presented. The Chapter concludes with an argument for the conclusion of the completed study.

Research conducted with postsecondary students with disabilities encompasses a wide spectrum of focused topics, which includes academic accommodations (Toutain, 2019), residential housing support (Graves, 2020), and several interpretations of inclusion and acceptance within their campus communities (Safer, 2020). There was a sparsity in the literature that specifically addresses the relationship between this group of students and their reliance on and experiences with enrollment services. In addition, there is a paucity of research that speaks to the experiences of students utilizing one stops, regardless of their disability identities. Therefore, in this literature, the requisite knowledge is addressed by (1) synthesizing the literature on the experiences students with disabilities have with enrollment management and student affairs, and (2) exploring relevant areas of inquiry to enrich the understanding of one stops within the realm of enrollment management.

There is insufficient information in the literature that provides a foundational understanding of the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities utilizing enrollment management services. These experiences are often relegated to minor references in larger studies.
that focus on other topics (Burghstahler & Moore, 2009). Co-curricular support needs (e.g., out-of-the-classroom learning opportunities that foster holistic development and self-reflection), as defined in Chapter 1, are similar in nature across different institutions, yet how they are delivered is arguably a direct reflection of each individual college or university’s culture (Ashmore et al., 2018). This study, one that is comprehensive in nature and explored the lived experiences of postsecondary students through the lens of enrollment management, addressed this gap in the literature.

Factors that lead to the phenomenon of one stops were best understood through a review of the history of enrollment management, including its evolution of strategic enrollment management. Because empirical studies that provide insight into the experiences of students utilizing one stops are very limited, best practices from institutions that adopted the service model can be a resource in understanding the phenomenon.

A comprehensive overview of three topics was needed to establish a thorough understanding of this study’s research questions. These three primary topics included the importance of implementing one stops in post-secondary institutions, the current state of enrollment management and strategic enrollment management, and the experiences of students with disabilities while attending postsecondary institutions.

**Methodology Used to Identify Relevant Literature to Review**

The inclusion criterion used to determine entries that addressed the research questions identified in Chapter 1 allowed entry of any articles in scholarly publications that focused on (1) enrollment management, (2) strategic enrollment management, (3) one stops, whether exclusive to postsecondary settings or not, and (4) co-curricular and curricular experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities. The rationale in support of this broad inclusion criterion
is simply that few empirical studies appear in the literature on post-secondary one stops. Therefore, any studies that could supplement the dearth of relevant literature that would potentially contribute to addressing this gap in the literature were accepted.

Multiple relevant databases were searched to locate and identify relevant literature, including Academic OneFile, Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, and ProQuest. Relevant search terms used to find articles to review included: *enrollment management*, *strategic enrollment management*, *one stop*, *post-secondary or college or university or higher education*, *SEM*, and *student affairs*. Deployment of these search terms returned results, and through a review of each article’s abstract and findings section, articles were selected for further analysis. When necessary, the ancestry method of identifying other relevant journal articles embedded within reference lists was utilized to identify additional entries for review. This study also reviewed completed doctoral dissertations that addressed one stops for germane literature that could assist in the breadth of this Chapter.

Although there is an abundance of scholarly contributions to the field of strategic enrollment management, there is a dearth of empirical studies that focus exclusively on the relationship between enrollment management and the one stop model. One possible explanation for this lack of information may be that one stops are relatively new. Additionally, one stop models that are in existence follow unique and diverse organizational structures, which can often be geared specifically toward the institution’s population (Altieri, 2019b; Simpson, 2018).

In order to make sense of the reviewed literature within the scope of this study, a theoretical framework was applied to advance the collection and synthesis of relevant research. The interpretation and evaluation of the literature required direction, specifically one that supported the rationale and purpose of this study. This study sought to understand the ways in
which postsecondary students with disabilities utilize one stop services. For this reason, the
social model of disability was selected as the theory upon which findings and interpretation of
future collected data were extrapolated. The following section provides more information on the
social model of disability and its significance as a guiding theory when understanding
postsecondary students and one stops.

**Theoretical Framework – The Social Model of Disability**

Through the encouragement of thought centered on the historically normative interpretation
of the human experience, Disability Studies addresses the existence of disablism in relation to
the understanding of how non-normative individuals are perceived (Goodley, 2017). Disability
Studies pushes the accountability of disablement away from an individual and instead upon the
environment, reframing the experience of disability as a societal issue (Anicha et al., 2017). In
this case, the same can be understood as an institutional issue, with the individual campus
embodying a micro-society experienced by students. Additionally, this shift seeks to invalidate
the previous hegemonic influence of the medical model of disability, which, as previously stated,
is deeply rooted in the experience of postsecondary students seeking accommodated support.
Siebers (2011) identified the depiction of disability through the medical model as a long-standing
tradition, tracing back to the beginning of humanity.

The social model of disability was integral to this study. In developing an understanding
of how to frame disability, it was imperative to understand that disability is only one of many
identities that students carry, and the relationship between these identities may impact their
experiences with retention, persistence, and completion (Miller, 2015; Ressa, 2023). Whereas the
medical model would isolate the impairment as a single factor that should be rehabilitated in
order for a student to live a normal life, the social model instead situates disability as a multi-
faceted phenomenon that interfaces with engagement in a variety of ways (Goodley, 2016). Because students do not describe their disabilities the same way and in the way their disabilities define them, the experiences of students that should seemingly be similar may be completely different due to several additional factors (Kimball et al., 2017).

Several seminal theorists, philosophers, and activists have contributed significantly to the development of the social model of disability. Shakespeare (2013) identified the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) as the developer of the social model of disability in the 1970s. A small group of Marxist activists who sought to reject mainstream policies that, at the time, segregated people with disabilities in favor of opportunities for full social participation, UPIAS identified barriers as disabling elements preventing their inclusion within society. Additional groups of activists throughout the next few years followed suit and contributed to acknowledging the oppression of people with disabilities and the role the physical environment played in the act of disabling. These groups included the Liberation Network of People with Disabilities and the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People (BCODP). According to Shakespeare (2013), the coining of the term “the social model of disability” is credited to Mike Oliver, who worked to promote the politics of disablement in the creation of an academic course on disability in 1983.

Additionally, the social model of disability serves as a framework for exploring how physical space is experienced by individuals with disabilities (Goodley, 2017). Specifically, within the context of this study, one stops within four-year public and private institutions exist as a shared physical space for all postsecondary students, regardless of disability identity. According to Lonabocker and Wager (2007), space within a one stop should be convenient and comfortable for students, with particular attention paid to how noise, light, privacy, and airflow
are maintained. How postsecondary students perceive a shared space when receiving support, specifically the manifestation of their sense of inclusion with their peers is necessary knowledge to begin to understand ways in which the shared spaces are unique to this population (Reardon et al., 2018).

Physical Space

Understanding the relationship between students with disabilities and the physical spaces that make up their campuses is important when researching the experiences of this population (Thornton & Downs, 2010). Discussions centering around the application of universal design principles in student service departments consider multiple interpretations of how physical space can be used by students (Anderson et al., 2015). In a study conducted with 16 students focusing on this relationship, Pearson and Samura (2017) reinforced the importance of this relationship, stating, “every setting is a form of social meaning as individuals engage with each other and space; therefore, the socio-spatial dynamics of disability may evince how disability is diversity” (p. 90). They furthered this notion by explicating that space is as capable of affecting people as the inverse. Their findings recommended moving towards a more enabling and inclusive society that considered the socio-spatial dynamics of disability within a physical space.

Within Pearson and Samura’s (2017) study, three identified themes emphasize the importance of this study. To begin, both disability and physical space exist as contested, where space creates political conflicts over resources and access. A lack of physical access restricts the ability of students with disabilities to fully explore resources, such as building relationships with inaccessible members of the campus community. Physical spaces that are accessible by all students may be utilized differently, and these utilizations may create tension for students occupying the shared space. Visual mediums enforce a hindrance when institutions do not adhere
to recommended accessibility standards. A second finding, disability and space as fluid and historical focusing on majority-minority, emphasized that disability interpretations evolve. This ultimately led to the realization that “while there is fluidity within the perception of one’s disability, disability continues to be salient as one continuously negotiates space” (Pearson & Samura, 2017, p. 95).

The third finding of Pearson and Samura’s (2017) study, disability and space defined by difference and inequality, specifically campuses that separate, draws attention to the impact that campus location of relevant support offices has on students with disabilities. Approaching this from a lens of power and inequality, Pearson and Samura (2017) concluded through their study that the need to traverse a campus to receive specific services creates additional barriers for students with disabilities. Students who are unable to navigate through segregated departments effectively may be unable to receive effective support, which consequently impacts retention and persistence. Similar to disability, space is shaped by inequality and difference. Upon consideration of the socio-spatiality of this population of students at an institutional level, it is evident that failing to account for the locations of important departments furthers the lack of power experienced by students with disabilities.

With a theoretical framework established for guiding this study, this Chapter continues with a review of three fundamental areas of the literature. These three key areas include (1) enrollment management and strategic enrollment management, (2) one stops in postsecondary settings, and (3) students with disabilities in postsecondary settings utilizing student services.

**Enrollment Management and Strategic Enrollment Management**

A systematic review of the literature on strategic enrollment management yielded four common themes that explore its impact on the development of one stop enrollment service
centers. These themes, in no particular order, include collaboration and relations (the benefits of centralization), the importance of data-driven decision-making models, the consistent emphasis on student success from recruitment to completion, and understanding and embracing the need for constant change in postsecondary settings. Each of the four themes is reviewed in greater detail in the following sections.

**Collaboration and Relationships – The Benefits of Centralization**

The literature on strategic enrollment management emphasizes the importance of relationships within separate, previously unrelated departments to drive enrollment processes that deliver a seamless and successful experience for students while also actively contributing to good enrollment health for the institution (Hornor, 2020; Smith & Harris, 2021). Although the roots of strategic enrollment management exist within admissions and financial aid, it is evident that the involvement of all student-centered departments is critical for a successful practice (Henderson, 2017). Wichita State University’s university registrar and chief data officer (CDO) understood the impact that collaboration on data governance has on decision-making, explicitly noting the importance of “ongoing data quality efforts, elimination of data silos, shared business practices, defined data, and reporting standards, and a culture of data as an information asset rather than a transaction” (Crabtree & Wright, 2021, p. 37). To successfully implement a strategic enrollment management approach, the data in question needed to be accessible in real-time, as well as accurate and actionable. Although the importance of data-driven decisions will be expanded upon in a later section, the phenomenon of cross-campus collaborative efforts toward data governance establishes a foundational example of how relationships between departments shift the decision-making responsibilities of enrollment managers toward a direction that emphasizes centralization (Seifert et al., 2017).
As strategic enrollment management is a comprehensive and coordinated process, best practices underscore the importance of integration and inclusion across co-dependent departments (Kerlin, 2008). As campuses gain traction toward improving recruitment and retention through these relationships, the culture of siloed departments begins to lose favor. The traditional silo environment is described in the literature on strategic enrollment management as a setting where key offices are not strategically linked (Kisling et al., 2021). Strategic enrollment management discourages the silo model in favor of a centralized organizational chart that encourages relationships between key offices, underscoring a practice of equal partnerships that mutually benefit each other (Crabtree & Wright, 2021; Stanton et al., 2017). For example, linking strategic enrollment management with institutional strategic planning and assessment protocols “enhances outcomes and processes such as planning, funding prioritization, synergies in data analytics, and capacity building” (Horner, 2020, p. 21). In some instances, progression from the traditional silo environment to a more centralized model instantaneously reduces the phenomenon of what is colloquially known as the ‘run around’ for students seeking support (Altieri, 2019a; Walters, 2003).

Additional emphasis is found in the relationships between relevant campus stakeholders beyond administrative units, deep into the realm of college faculty and academic affairs (Puckett, 2021; Smith et al., 2020). Smith and Harris (2021) interviewed nine faculty members and ten chief enrollment managers employed at institutions of higher education across North America, seeking to identify the factors driving the partnership between both parties. Specifically, they sought to understand better how faculty shapes recruitment, student support, and retention. Through their understanding of the lived professional experiences of these individuals, the researchers concluded that faculty involvement beyond their participation in admissions
committees and teaching, including individual student intervention and participation in events such as new student orientation, galvanizes faculty to support the institution in furthering each incoming class.

Ultimately, collaboration goes well beyond the expectation of cooperation and “embraces constructive management of differences” (Smith et al., 2021, p. 38). A case study completed on the partnership between enrollment managers and faculty through participatory action, where both parties worked in harmony with each other, expanded on the benefit of the inclusion of faculty in SEM as a means of creating institutional conditions that encouraged a campus climate in tune with the well-being of students (Stanton et al., 2017). Building off of the literature that supports the relationship between student well-being and retention, the use of “participative and iterative mechanisms [allows] projects to evolve based on stakeholder input and celebrating strengths and successes to further build momentum” (Stanton et al., 2017, p. 157).

Data-Driven Decision-Making Models

As previously stated, the literature on SEM is evident on the importance of data in post-secondary decision-making, with a constant emphasis on the expectation of enrollment managers to study the data closely and with intent (Crabtree & Wright, 2021; Gordon, 2018; Kisling et al., 2021; Smith & Harris, 2021). Failure to collect and analyze data severely restricts enrollment managers from making strategic decisions, with the literature revealing the expectation of any institution that practices SEM to use the data available to understand better the short- and long-term impact any enrollment decision has on current and future students (LaShure et al., 2019). There exist many references within the literature to the use of enrollment data as a means of identifying functional patterns (Flanigan, 2016; Sprehe, 2021). Efforts to ensure data is of the highest quality support the phenomenon of shared data governance, which encourages the
elimination of data siloes, the reclassification of data from a transaction to information assets, and the encouragement of shared business practices among SEM stakeholders. Enrollment managers pull data from agile data systems that house current student information, historical records of alumni, and prospective applicants (Crabtree & Wright, 2021).

Evidence-rich information is “critical to sound decision-making” (Gordon, 2018, p. 2). Data sources for enrollment management decision-making are derived from various sources (Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2017). Prospective student data, for example, is pulled from the application and pre-application sources. The admitted and current student data is housed within student information systems, often accessible by a select number of institutional employees (Kisling et al., 2021). The manner in which sensitive student information is disseminated across campus to individuals without direct access to applications and student information systems varies; however, the ability to access and utilize this data is critical (Sprehe, 2021). In some instances, large-scale restructuring of several departments is necessary to stimulate the essential relationships of departments with previously siloed data (Crabtree & Wright, 2021). The literature shows that data is processed into the information reports made available to bring the direct experience of students to campus decision-making authorities, such as the Chief Financial Officer, the Provost, and the members of the Board of Trustees (Gordon, 2018).

Pike and Robbins (2016) examined the effectiveness of SEM efforts through the use of enrollment propensity, or the measure of the likelihood of a prospective applicant to enroll in college. Initially claiming the critical impact prospective applicant characteristics, such as gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and measurable academic achievement, have on student success, they evaluated institutional policies and actions. For example, they focused on the manner in which multiple prospective applicant characteristics interact and how these
interactions impact college choice. Additionally, they assessed the impact on school characteristics, including the availability of counseling, information on financial assistance, institutional SES defined by resource imbalances, and historical rates of graduates attending college on prospective applicants. Their study determined that student and school characteristics influence the likelihood of prospective students enrolling in college, contributing to the literature on high school characteristics determining college enrollment decisions. Ultimately, this rich data influences the actions enrollment managers take when recruiting and retaining students and, as such, is subject to multiple iterations of review and analysis with additional campus stakeholders who also maintain a vested interest in ensuring a stable incoming class each academic year (Gordon, 2018).

**Emphasizing Student Success from Recruitment to Completion**

Beyond the importance of collaborative efforts and data, which serve as critical and necessary elements of SEM, the goal of connecting students to their campus (Henderson, 2017; Stanton et al., 2017) exists as a hallmark of strategic efforts. As previously stated, there exists a positive correlation between students who report high levels of satisfaction with their institutions and higher graduation rates (Bryant & Bodfish, 2014; Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2016; Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2017). For this reason, decisions that impact the hiring and recruitment of individuals in critical SEM-related positions generally involve an assessment of the potential to further advance the student body beyond a simple focus on academic ability (Gordy, 2018). Ensuring that individuals understand this phenomenon at all stages of a student’s time, from application to graduation, is necessary. In a study conducted on faculty admission review practices within graduate enrollment management (GEM), Cano et al. discovered that certain faculty with similar backgrounds displayed common behaviors when reviewing applications (2018). Specifically,
first-generation faculty members expressed more empathy when making admissions decisions on first-generation applicants, with their decisions to shape the class frequently affording excuses for subpar standardized test scores despite their continued relevance in predicting program success. In such an example, two different goals are possible: a more diverse student body and a potential decrease in selectivity for retention purposes. Corrective action towards faculty who engage in these behaviors at an early stage in the process transpires when enrollment managers intervene with additional training resources and guidelines (Puckett, 2021).

The creation, implementation, and maintenance of student-centered resources maintained by enrollment managers are vital elements in creating agency among students to self-navigate their campuses. Intentional development of departmental policies and procedures, as well as campus-wide programming, is contingent upon a balanced understanding of the institution’s community and standard practices, with individual leaders making campus-specific decisions to address the needs of their population (Wohlgemuth, 2013). Yet the realization of this agency is achieved through participation in formal and informal development. In a nationwide survey, Lucido et al. (2018) found that among 273 senior enrollment management professionals, approximately 70% believed that an early-to-mid-level SEM professional should obtain a graduate degree in a related field, demonstrating a clear preference for formal education. Specifically, the survey participants ranked programs that educate on strategic planning as the most critical area to address, followed by enrollment research, higher education finance, marketing in higher education, and an understanding of the admissions model. The survey findings also reflected an expectation of these professionals’ obtaining recruitment and retention expertise through practical experience. This expectation extends beyond enrollment management toward student affairs professionals as well (Hossler, 2014).
The scholarship on SEM is rich with direct references to the importance of student affairs. For example, Gordon (2018), when referring to student affairs, stated that it is “integral to the learning process because the opportunities it provides students to learn through the action, contemplation, reflection, and emotional engagement as well as information acquisition” (p. 12). Student affairs programming that is sensitive to the holistic growth of a student, emphasizing the myriad of ways in which students can further connect with their peers while gaining exposure to leadership opportunities and cultural enrichment, increases the chances for retention and heightened levels of student satisfaction (Serna, 2017; Schuh et al., 2017). Ensuring enrollment managers and student affairs professionals can work in a union creates a campus climate that affords students uniformed opportunities to receive advice and support with co-curricular services.

Retention responsibilities move beyond enrollment management and student affairs and also enter into the realm of academic affairs. It is evident in the literature that academic advising that is student-centered and consists of a meaningful relationship between the student and their advisor that goes beyond yearly transactional meetings is critical for graduation support and student satisfaction (Bryant & Bodfish, 2014). Several articles underscored the reality that efforts to connect academic advisors with their students early in the matriculation process are often found to increase student satisfaction (Maxwell, 2017; Stanton et al., 2017).

The extent to which faculty participate in the recruitment process varies from the institution and program type (Puckett, 2021). As previously stated, within graduate admissions, for example, GEM places a heavier emphasis on the faculty role to assist in the recruitment process, utilizing a separate strategic plan, admissions office, and operational budget. Puckett’s (2021) research on the involvement of faculty in GEM found that faculty involved in the
recruitment process are often most concerned about compromising the quality of prospective students to maintain healthy enrollment goals in consideration of a competitive enrollment market. To address these concerns, a focus group was held to conduct an initial review of outreach efforts. In understanding the faculty's lack of experience with marketing or enrollment management in general, a “marathon map” was created and introduced during a half-day workshop. This new tool presented a chronological timeline with detailed information and a rationale for each step of the recruitment process from an SEM perspective, improving the experience and providing better results.

**Understanding and Embracing the Need for Constant Change**

The longevity of a successful strategic plan is contingent upon an institution’s willingness to commit to continuous improvement in order to successfully remain student-centered as trends among the needs of incoming students evolve (Walters, 2003). Institutions engaging in SEM practices design cogent strategic plans annually, relying on empirical findings from industry reports (Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2017) to identify necessary changes in recruitment and retention resources and services such as advising and marketing. The literature, though clear on the benefits, underscores the challenges that discourage some institutions from fully committing to the implementation of SEM (Lonabocker & Wager, 2007). It is worth noting that the typical timeframe for higher education SEM implementation is reported to be between three and six years (Hornor, 2020). Intentional and unintentional changes within such a considerable timeframe are all but inevitable, and within this time, resistance can be amplified by several factors. One criticism involves the uncomfortable phases associated with organizational and enterprise change (Smith et al., 2020). In the context of the literature, change refers to adjustments in
physical space, organizational structure, and long-held beliefs about higher education delivery (Smith et al., 2020).

Smith et al. (2020) conducted a case study of a mid-sized rural college experiencing “loss of fiscal and enrollment vitality, accompanied by the termination of some instructional programs, contributed to a growing sense of urgency to implement enrollment-strengthening strategies” (p. 34) that ultimately led to the creation of a centralized one stop to increase access while improving student retention simultaneously. Analyzing the results of a focus group of students with researchers seeking to identify conditions for increasing well-being on campus, Stanton et al. (2017) concluded that a change in the environment that leads to the integration of both the social and academic cultures of institution support is of critical importance in integrating students into their curricular and co-curricular communities. The magnitude of change that an institution may experience exists on a broad spectrum. Finally, recent studies on SEM in a post-COVID-19 world have attempted to address the ability to handle change in unprecedented times (Sprehe, 2021), drawing parallels between the impact on post-secondary enrollment that occurred during the Great Recession between 2007 and 2009 and the current reality faced by enrollment managers.

With a developed understanding of the thematic elements that define enrollment management and strategic enrollment management as a whole within postsecondary settings, this Chapter continues to explore the core of this completed study’s inquiry. In the sections that follow, one stops in postsecondary settings, emblematic of concerted elements of strategic enrollment management, will be explored in detail.
One Stops in Postsecondary Settings

The decision to create a one stop is deeply rooted in the institution’s unique campus climate (Walters, 2003). A campus’ unique culture shapes the one stop, and how and when a college or university decides to pursue such a model for their enrollment services is contingent upon internal and external factors (Ousley, 2006).

History of One Stops

Lonabocker and Wager (2007) explored the evolution of the present-day one stop, framing its inception as the consequence of a “tipping point.” These tipping points contributed to the rationale behind supporting integrated services and have “profound effects on the enrollment services profession, transforming the way business is conducted” (Lonabocker & Wager, 2007, p.120). A brief history of one stops in postsecondary settings will be included later in this chapter.

As national postsecondary enrollment numbers steadily increased in the 1970s (Hossler, 2014), it was determined that students required a significant amount of time to complete mandatory administrative errands, emphasizing a standard of imposition. Many of these required tasks were housed within the umbrella of student services, necessitating students to be routed from location to location to fulfill financial obligations, complete registration, and remain in good standing with non-curricular institutional duties. Integrated services through a one stop allowed students to relinquish their dependence on the restrictions of multiple physical administrative offices, opting instead for transactions that require convenient self-service within a single location (Russman, 2004). Institution leaders began considering ways students could perform tasks comprehensively within one central location (Ousley, 2006).
The following is a brief history of the evolution of the one stop model. Lonabocker and Wager (2007) cited the University of Delaware as one of the earliest institutions to implement a successful one stop by constructing a student services building. The new location was inspired by the banking model, with branches “set up to be quick and effective, provide various types of interaction, and use the latest technology to provide services to customers” (p.122). In 1996, Carnegie Mellon University followed suit. It introduced its student services office, nicknamed “the hub,” which revolutionized one stops through the adoption of email as an official means of communication and the availability of online support services for registration, academic records, and financial aid packaging. A final notable entry in the history of one stops in higher education includes the decision to establish an enrollment management task force at the New York Institute of Technology in 2002. Through this newly established committee, generalists and specialists began to meet regularly to not only improve cross-training efforts but also to share their experiences and make recommendations toward improving services offered to students.

**Strategic Enrollment Management’s Support of the One Stop Model**

Paradoxically, a successful enrollment manager balances a strategic plan that utilizes and exhausts cross-campus resources to bring in a qualified class of incoming students while simultaneously using and exhausting similar resources to ensure retention, satisfaction, and, ultimately, completion (Hossler & Bontrager, 2014). Yet there only exists a finite amount of time, energy, and resources that can support these two responsibilities, and as the scholarship indicates, strategic enrollment management relies on the support of multiple campus stakeholders (Hornor, 2020; Lucido et al., 2018; Price & Albano, 2018; Secore, 2019). When siloed, these units contribute to a complicated, disjointed pathway of success, requiring prospective and current students to succumb to the ‘run-around’ in order to navigate their institutions (Perry,
2022). For these reasons, the advancement of one stops are possible solutions to doing more with less, a phenomenon that many enrollment managers’ report feeling has become the new norm (The Advisory Board Company, 2009).

Ultimately, decisions made with the goal of supporting postsecondary students through the collaboration of internal and external enrollment decisions justify the implementation of one stops (Lonabocker & Wager, 2007). Studies repeatedly cite three major benefits of centralizing services into one stops: integration, efficiency, and satisfaction (Howard, 2017). The popular elements of a one stop include the availability of generalists who assist with identifying the needs of students (Ousley, 2006), providing information, facilitating access and referrals to additional campus departments, and assisting with enrollment management related tasks, either in person, over the phone, or virtually through email or instant messaging, further the mission of SEM on a college campus (Daugherty & Tsai, 2017).

As previously stated, individual departments that are centralized into a single one stop have the potential to impact the extent of support that students can receive significantly. As expected, given the significant impact financial aid plays in student retention, the inclusion of this department is all but expected to ensure success. The larger the number of layers of support centralized, the greater the reach of the department’s impact, but only if this number includes relevant departments that operate in conjunction with financial aid, such as admissions, the Registrar’s office, and student business services (often referred to as the Bursar’s office). Through concerted efforts among these service units, enrollment managers and their teams can continuously engage with students in a single location, improving the student experience as well as their overall success.
Although supported by empirical studies (Perry, 2022), instances of one stops falling short of impactful change exist within the literature. Daugherty and Tsai conducted a study (2017) to review the impact made by Single Stops. These unique one stops specific to regional community colleges in North Carolina assist students with obtaining co-curricular support services, such as receipt of referrals for federal benefits and assistance with completing complicated government paperwork. This study’s particular focus was on a one stop model that is not associated with enrollment management services, yet its structure and operation emulate a one stop that is. Additionally, the study measured student persistence, including an analysis of college credit attempted and earned. Students who benefited from Single Stop displayed a higher rate of persistence, earning more college credit, specifically non-traditional students; unfortunately, because the increase was only a single credit hour, the results are deemed statistically insignificant (LaShure et al., 2019).

**Students with Disabilities in Postsecondary Settings Utilizing Student Services**

As the number of resources and services available to postsecondary students with disabilities continues to grow, so does the size of this population across institutions of higher education (Hadley & Archer, 2017). Yet the available literature on the experiences of these students in comparison to their peers is not seeing a similar growth (Kimball et al., 2017). To best understand the experiences of students with disabilities at a one stop it is imperative to establish an awareness of their overall postsecondary experience utilizing general support services. Without knowing how students view the bigger picture, there are limited adequate means of interpreting their interactions with a single department. By exploring the literature of students with disabilities and what their college experience is, an underlying foundation can serve as a means of having somewhere to reference previously studied phenomena. However, it
must be stated that “students with disabilities undergo various experiences during their college years that ultimately influence their overall satisfaction with higher education” (Aquino et al., 2017, p. 47). This group is not monolithic, and research should only serve as a means of gaining overall awareness.

Many studies identified and analyzed the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities utilizing academic accommodations as a means of exploring the stigma this population faced (Burgstahler, 2015; Kimball et al., 2017). This topic is important, but as Kroeger and Kraus (2017) stated, “beyond reasonable accommodations, campuses do not readily support the disability community or disability identity development through cultural programming or organizations, bringing into question how inclusive or welcoming our campuses are to disabled students” (p. 216). Some studies, including Wilke et al. (2019), draw parallels between the location of campus amenities and departments and the ability of postsecondary students with disabilities to feel connected to their entire campus community. As such, the following section addresses the experiences of students with disabilities beyond accommodations and focuses instead on additional barriers this population faces when pursuing higher education (Shallish, 2017).

**Institutional Integration and Engagement**

Aquino et al. (2017) cited institutional integration, or a student’s ability to adapt to an educational environment, as a determining factor of a postsecondary student with disability’s retention, persistence, and, ultimately, completion. Comprised of two distinct layers, academic integration, the student’s ability to perform academically to meet educational goals, and social integration, involvement with others leading to the construction of a social network, research continuously demonstrated a positive relationship between institutional integration and increased
completion rates. Using data from the Diverse Learning Environment (DLE) survey obtained through HERI, this study of 13,844 students, 16% of which identified as having at least one disability, reported lower integration scores for students with disabilities when asked about their sense of belonging, institutional commitment to diversity, and discrimination and bias. The identification of students who belong to multiple minority groups, including race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, resulted in further reduced scores, with these particular students reporting a lower sense of integration with their campus.

Engagement with an institution of higher education is similar to integration in that it is tied to successful persistence and completion. Kimball et al. (2017) underscored the impact of engagement by moving beyond understanding the positive consequences of increased involvement and addressing the importance of how students process and reflect on these experiences. They identified four recurring themes regarding engagement upon completion of a narrative analysis research study with eight students who identified as having learning disabilities. Of particular importance to this study were variations in access to institutional support, which illuminated the fact that the ability to access additional support from their institution’s disability resources office beyond federally mandated services had a positive impact on the persistence and retention of these students. These additional support services were utilized until students felt they were no longer necessary.

Embedded within the navigation of postsecondary institutions exists the utilization of student services. This study defined student services within student affairs and enrollment management departments. Disability service offices were described as residing in student services in spite of offering academic accommodations and support (Harbour, 2009). There is a paucity of literature regarding one stops. Research that addresses the relationship between non-
academic staff and students with disabilities provides greater insight into student experiences. Administrators within higher education are often comprised of a diverse group of professionals that span multiple other functional areas (Lombardi & Lalor, 2019).

The literature on how postsecondary students with disabilities become involved with their institutions identified efforts beyond curricular affairs as influential in establishing a sense of belonging (Mayhew et al., 2016). Studies found that co-curricular participation directly impacts postsecondary students with disabilities and their likelihood of success, notably when their institutions invest resources into establishing environments where this population of students is encouraged (Evans et al., 2023). When co-curricular activities are defined as seeking enrollment support, these environments pose barriers to postsecondary students with disabilities, such as physical obstructions and a lack of support on behalf of department representatives. In these instances, studies have identified efforts to ensure the reduction of these limiting factors as positively influencing the sense of belonging amongst postsecondary students with disabilities (Katzman & Kinsella, 2018).

**Staff Knowledge Regarding Disability**

Postsecondary staff and administrators play an important role in influencing the experiences of students with disabilities (Lombardi & Lalor, 2017). Students with disabilities report a wide range of experiences in utilizing services and obtaining support from non-academic staff and administrators (Leake et al., 2014). Within this group of staff and administrators exist student affairs and enrollment management professionals. The lack of knowledge of staff regarding disability issues and related politics contributes to the potential segregation of these students from their campus communities in response to student perceived unavailability of support (Aquino et al., 2017). This lack of support may be related to the competency of staff
regarding knowledge about disability (e.g., disability laws, the range of disability types, and an understanding of the history of discrimination against individuals with disabilities; Lombard & Lalor, 2017).

Burgstahler and Moore (2009) conducted a study with 53 postsecondary students with disabilities seeking to understand their experiences with staff from student service offices (SSO). Participants reported feeling disrespected by SSO staff, who were assumed to have had no training in working with this population of students. In addition, a lack of sensitivity towards the needs of students with disabilities emphasized a lack of understanding of legal protections guaranteed to this population. Upon analysis of interview and focus group data, a recommendation of various training formats, such as on-site workshops, including options for staff members who may not be able to schedule time for professional development during operational hours, as well as increased access to materials summarized brochures and comprehensive guides, were identified. O’Shea (2017) reported multiple narratives of student participants requesting the services offered by their institution’s Disability Services Office to move beyond traditional support of providing accommodations. Instead, they sought the opportunity to have a sounding board and desired increased support and assistance in making larger academic decisions, including more support with determining their course schedule. The recommendation is dependent upon an increased level of expertise among staff, which the literature identified as lacking (Reed et al., 2015).

Postsecondary students reported their initial interactions with Disability Support Services staff members as a measurement of their comfort levels in potentially seeking future support. Kendall (2016) identified that surveyed students with disabilities expressed positive feelings for the Disability Services Office’s services offered, emphasizing efficiency and comfort in
returning for additional support. Services rendered were deemed satisfactory, implying a foundational knowledge base within Disability Services Office team to support these students. Conversely, when students reported they felt they were a burden to support staff, they became discouraged from seeking further assistance, which they attributed as a factor in their inability to achieve academic success (Lyman et al., 2016; Yssel et al., 2016).

These concerns are further magnified when students perceive support staff responses as reactive rather than proactive (Burgstahler & Moore, 2009). The literature includes examples of students who indicated designated staff members individually assigned to assist as being unhelpful, lacking the individualized support needed, as well as failing to assist with providing support to students with varying types of disabilities (Fleming, 2017; Leake et al., 2014). Hong (2015) emphasized that a lack of knowledge by support staff is reported to be often accompanied by a sense of unresponsiveness. Students surveyed about this phenomenon responded by identifying levels of dissatisfaction. Additionally, they associated this level of service with an overall lack of interest in their postsecondary success. These concerns elucidate the perceived reality that students with disabilities experience (Lombardi & Lalor, 2017). They report a lack of fit when compared to college students without disabilities, amplifying the need for additional support for their success, which is often lacking (Burgstahler & Moore, 2009).

Burgstahler and Moore (2009) found there was a lack of fit when staff were interviewed regarding their confidence in the level of training they received to support students with disabilities reported mixed reviews. In a survey of four disability support coordinators within a postsecondary institution in the United Kingdom, Koca-Atabey (2017) recounted an overwhelming response supporting the need for additional professional growth. This study also identified that participants desired flexibility in training, which supported their motivation to
learn more about assisting students with disabilities. This study emphasized a commonly reported phenomenon (Kimball et al., 2016) in which staff who are not fully knowledgeable of student disabilities maintain a desire to increase their awareness. This finding is not consistent within the literature. Burgstahler and Moore (2009) reported that SSOs that lacked an understanding of the legal requirements reported no interest in becoming subject matter experts, instead affirming their belief that this particular knowledge base should remain in the Disability Services Office. Within this model, they reported a desire to retain fully trained and engaged team members to provide services to students with disabilities. This conclusion does not take into consideration that not all support requested by a student requires a full understanding of their particular disability (Thornton & Downs, 2011).

The literature regarding student affairs professionals highlights the awareness held among these individuals and their lack of formal training and preparation in working with students with disabilities (Lombardi & Lalor, 2017). Student Affairs professionals are heavily involved in co-curricular activities that enrich experiences beyond academic coursework. A knowledge of disability laws and compliance simultaneously enriches the experience of students with disabilities by ensuring compliance while also protecting the university. Student Affairs professionals report holding a positive view of this population. Still, a lack of relevant and appropriate training needed to serve students with disabilities is generally understood as existing within the profession (Kimball et al., 2016b).

**Student’s Negative Experience Regarding Campus Resources**

As a whole, college and university support service departments, inclusive of individual staff members within these departments, were repeatedly referenced as requiring improvements in order to increase inclusion of students with disabilities within their campus communities.
(Burgstahler & Moore, 2009; Fleming et al., 2017; Leake et al., 2014). Within these required improvements existed issues regarding the interpretation of methods of disability disclosure, including addressing who to disclose to and when to disclose. Additionally, the complexities of students not only expecting staff to understand their disabilities but also to assist in advocating for the utilization of individualized accommodations were reported by students with disabilities in multiple studies (Beck et al., 2014; Reed et al., 2015; Thornton, 2011).

Fossey et al. (2017) summarized what was commonly identified as a student-held misconception of an Australian college that solely identifying the acknowledgment of a disability identity on various enrollment forms would be sufficient to initiate additional support from the college’s Disability Services Office. The qualitative study determined that this was not the case. The appearance of unclear instructions for requesting accessibility support is seen as adversely impacting students with disabilities, leading to potential oversights that eventually jeopardize their success. Cawthon and Cole (2010) identified that only 43% of students with disabilities surveyed within their study directly interacted with the Disability Services Office of their institution. Ultimately, Cawthon and Cole identified a series of possible factors contributing to the break in connection between this population of students and the Disability Services Office. Particularly noteworthy, students lacking the ability to locate relevant services physically were commonly addressed in their study. This was identified in additional studies as a potential contributing factor to this break in communication (Hong, 2015; Meyers, 2009).

Appearing as a concern across multiple studies was the experience of students understanding the timing of when to report a request for disability support services (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Harbour, 2009; Hong, 2015; West, 1993; Yssel et al., 2016). Institutions of higher education do not require students to disclose their disabilities unless there is an explicit request to
seek support, such as academic accommodations (Fossey et al., 2017; Kendall, 2016). Notably absent in the literature are references to additional central locations beyond disability resource service centers where students with disabilities can receive support. Studies continue to reinforce that students are required to determine the appropriate time to seek assistance through their institution’s disability resource centers (Hong, 2015). Once students identify the time that works best for their individual needs, they are required to locate the campus-specific location for support, ideally their institution’s Disability Student Services Office. Within this process, students with disabilities reported a lack of understanding of where to self-report, carrying misconceptions of the process, including the lack of knowing the ways in which different categories of disabilities are accommodated (Lyman et al., 2016).

Additional studies also identified a sense of conflict among students with disabilities who attempted to understand how to become self-advocates when requesting support from campus resources (Hong, 2015). Surveyed students expressed frustration associated with the process of matriculating and experiencing what was identified as an overwhelming sense of confusion centered on options of support and how to work with campus-based staff to seek and obtain these services (Fleming et al., 2017; Harbour, 2009). Participant comments identified isolated offices siloed from other campus departments, which contributed to the confusion of understanding where to obtain certain services and imposed the burden of coordinating campus-traversing efforts upon themselves (Fleming et al., 2017). In addition to the lack of clarity regarding services offered, the ability to physically traverse the campus, an expectation of all students, can be a much more difficult experience for students with disabilities (Phillips et al., 2022).

Comparatively, students with disabilities identified their institution’s specific organizational reporting structure as a minor concern in addressing their experiences with
obtaining campus-wide services. Participants shared in Harbour (2009) that students with disabilities understood that accommodation support was provided by the institution, regardless of departmental or division affiliation. When disability resource centers are located in the Division of Student Affairs, students reported services offered as being focused more on co-curricular activities. Conversely, when Academic Affairs acted as the division location for this particular office, the focus of support was heavily centered on curricular elements. Accommodated support extends beyond curricular and co-curricular needs; however, the results of this study concluded that most departments offering support to students with disabilities are localized within the division of Student Affairs. Participants reported that through this model, there existed additional ties to the larger campus community, which underscored the Student Affairs approach to developing a holistic approach when fostering student growth.

Providing accommodations for students is perceived as the largest responsibility of a Disability Services Office and often the purpose behind a student’s initial contact (Brown & Broido, 2020). Under the ADA, an institution of higher education is required to provide accommodated support only for students who submit written verification of their disability by way of professional testing (ADA, 2008). Harbour (2009) identified that when Disability Service offices are situated within Student Affairs, there is a reported increase in the likelihood of a charged assessment fee when obtaining requisite documentation. This phenomenon is less likely to occur within offices located in the Division of Academic Affairs. This practice does not ultimately strip students with disabilities of their ability to receive necessary accommodations. Still, it is worth noting that a structured paywall may pose a barrier and decrease the likelihood of obtaining support.
Postsecondary students with disabilities continuously reported the lack of resources available to them (Burgstahler, 2009; Meyers, 2009). Colleges and universities nationwide are experiencing an increase in enrollment of students with disabilities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Still, this number pales in comparison with the number of individuals without disabilities that make up these institutions’ student body. For this reason, it is understandable that multiple campus-wide activities and experiences are planned with the participation of students without disabilities. Per federal legislation, however, colleges and universities are required to provide access and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities who seek support (Lyman et al., 2016). Students who ultimately decide against disclosing their disabilities, or those who simply fail to do so, negate opportunities for student support offices to improve the inclusivity of co-curricular support.

The delivery of co-curricular resources made available to students with disabilities impacts the perception this population has of their institution regarding their ability to assist (Fossey et al., 2017). The evaluation of accommodations is of concern to students, as studies conducted with students who transferred between institutions showed there may be different interpretations of supporting documentation impacting eligible accommodations, which may affect how these students received support (Lyman et al., 2016). Fleming et al. (2017) identified participants who reported negative experiences with resources as being particularly likely to request access to other types of support services, such as counseling and enhanced testing accommodations. It was discovered that these participants also identified areas that require significant improvement, including an increase in the number of testing centers at the institution and a means of increased additional attention from campus-wide staff and faculty.
Summary

Upon review of the literature on postsecondary students with disabilities, it was evident that additional information was needed regarding their experiences with a one stop. To begin, it appeared that there was a paucity of studies conducted that explored this gap in the literature. It was critical for more studies to take place within one stops, as Kimball et al. (2017) noted “good practice originates from good research” (p. 71). An increase in empirical work serves as a means of validating practical implications for the future of one stops. Additionally, the literature continuously reported an attenuated sense of belonging among this population.

The fully realized implementation of a one stop at a postsecondary institution is far from a guarantee of an improved overall student experience, as such an assumption fails to address the interdependent relationship between enrollment managers and the students they serve. As with all facets of SEM, decision-making remains contingent upon the collection of accurate and meaningful data, a process that can take several semesters to show trends that address what is working and what is not working at a one stop. Likewise, an institution’s student body is far from monolithic, and the various constituents who will rely on these services will approach the front counter of a one stop with a unique lived experience. It is the responsibility of each generalist to support these students and provide exemplary service, representing the institution’s mission to serve their community. This pressure is further magnified by the various campus stakeholders who either directly fund the department through operational funds or rely heavily on an expectation that the one stop successfully moves students through their matriculation.

It would seem virtually impossible to circumnavigate these obstacles. Still, a successful enrollment manager’s ability to identify and cultivate a strategic approach is critical during the unprecedented and unpredictable world of twenty-first-century higher education. Those that are
tasked to oversee their institution’s one stop can address the gaps in the literature by devoting time to better understanding the ways in which students interact with their institution’s one stop, expatiating on the experiences of particularly marginalized groups of students, such as students of color, queer students, and students who identify as having a disability. Such studies continuously defy the concept of a homogenous typical student and afford opportunities to reimagine the one stop as a means of equitable recruitment, retention, and support of all diverse members of the student population.

With research questions clearly identified and centered upon the problem statement of this dissertation, as well as a developed understanding of the scholarly literature needed to increase requisite knowledge, this study continues with a review of the procedural organization required. In the Chapter that follows, the constructivist grounded theory methodology and research methods that were employed for the study will be outlined in detail.
Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

The following Chapter addresses the methodology and methods that guided this research project. I begin by establishing the rationale behind selecting a qualitative research design, emphasizing the fit between the study’s research problem and the particular population I studied. Next, I elaborate on the history of the grounded theory methodology, emphasizing its evolution over the last several decades. This section is preceded by an exploration of constructivist grounded theory, the specific methodology used to address the research questions. I conclude this Chapter by detailing the individual methods used in this study.

Methodological Approach and Rationale

This study sought to understand the experiences of students with disabilities utilizing support services through their institution’s one stop. The guiding research questions drafted to explore this particular gap in the literature required a more exploratory approach to inquiry that was best addressed in a natural setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). As such, it was most appropriate to conduct a qualitative study. Goodley (2017) further supported qualitative research methods as appropriate for participants with disabilities by emphasizing that:

certain aspects of the obstacles to disabled people’s participation may be amenable to measurement, physical access, for example, there are other issues which are not; namely, prejudice. The latter is an elusive element of disablism and calls for methodologies more in tune with the meaning-making processes of everyday life. (p. 31)

Qualitative research designs create opportunities for researchers without disabilities to incorporate direct examples of the experiences of individuals with disabilities into the literature. In a later section, I refer to my positionality as an individual who does not identify as having a disability who conducted a research study with those who do. Goodley (2017) stated that
disablism, or the belief that people with disabilities are inferior to others, remains a concern that all should share and underscores the acceptance of the contribution of non-disabled researchers seeking to move beyond this prejudice. The decision of a researcher without a disability to engage in a project must be rooted in the reality of a perceived power struggle, with action taken to shatter this dynamic. I embraced the opportunity to co-construct meaning with individuals with disabilities through qualitative inquiry, simultaneously learning and identifying opportunities to change the conditions of current postsecondary educational settings.

The study utilized a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014). Constructivist grounded theory repositions the researcher, who previously assumed the role of a neutral observer and value-free expert (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), as seeking to understand how their privileges and preconceptions shape data analysis (Birks & Mills, 2016; Charmaz, 2014). The researcher’s place within the study ultimately shapes the final theory (Birks & Mills, 2016). This methodology is appropriate for research in which little is known, and knowledge creation is generated through analysis of the participants' direct experiences (Kimball et al., 2016). Within the literature used to guide this study, examples of constructivist grounded theory studies exist centered on the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities (Kimball et al., 2016; Miller, 2015; Vaccaro et al., 2018).

**Constructivist Grounded Theory and Understandings of Disability**

The following sections outline the rationale that supported constructivist grounded theory as the most appropriate research methodology to address the research questions of this study. The first factor is the acknowledgment of this area of research as being relatively new, and although prior studies explored postsecondary students with disabilities receiving support services (Burgstahler et al., 2009; Fleming et al., 2017; Leake et al., 2014; Lyman et al., 2016),
few examples specifically centered on the utilization of enrollment services. Literature exploring postsecondary students with disabilities utilizing one stop services is relatively absent. Research conducted within student service is critical for postsecondary students with disabilities as “student affairs professionals may look to serve as validating agents as an initial step towards supporting campus engagement among minoritized students” (Baber, 2019, p. 119). Validation in this regard refers to a confirmatory process, and institutional staff facilitates validation by active intervention, fostering engagement and belonging on campus.

Constructivist grounded theory brings together the researcher with experience and a solid understanding of the phenomenon that requires an explanatory theory to bridge the gap for clarity and understanding. I believe that it was integral to create such a theory that assists in identifying how students with disabilities utilize services at a one stop. These service models are growing in popularity (Perry, 2022). Ensuring future institutions have a means to review how students with disabilities perceived the support the receive at one stops, beyond compliance with mandated regulations, positively assists postsecondary institutions with increasing their student persistence and completion rates.

Present research shows that the predominant flagship studies are built upon the experiences of a particular group of students. Baber (2019) elaborated upon the realities that institutional practices' historical and contemporary elements include “exclusion and marginalization for the comfort of the privileged identity – white, male, heteronormative, cisgender, and/or wealthy. The result is covert normalization of structures and practices that appear culturally neutral but systematically disadvantage non-conformists” (Baber, 2019, p. 113). Students with disabilities report feeling excluded by peers, feeling restricted on campus, and ultimately struggling to locate their place within the campus community (Fleming et al.,
This study provided an opportunity for this population to be at the forefront of a novel body of research, an act of resistance that challenged previous norms.

Due to decreasing support for higher education, specifically state funds for public institutions being reduced and the need for students to take out loans increasing, “postsecondary institutions are increasingly focused on institutional practices that align with marked-based student outcomes” (Baber, 2019, p. 116). This is further explored by the understanding that lacking funding diminishes professional development opportunities where most of the “boundary-pushing” occurs (Baber, 2019, p. 124). Additionally worth noting is that “family income is critical for disabled students’ access to postsecondary education and their access to accommodations once enrolled” (Brown & Broido, 2020, p. 239).

**History of Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory introduced the notion of generating new theories from data rather than testing an existing theory to collect data (Birks & Mills, 2015). This qualitative methodology differs from other approaches to research in that it relies on an iterative cycle process. A grounded theory study inductively generates theory from data through constant comparative analysis (Mills & Birks, 2015). Data are collected and developed concurrently throughout the study. Contingent upon the philosophical stance of the researcher, one of three main genres of grounded theory may be utilized: traditional, evolved, or constructivist (Chun Tie et al., 2019). Regardless of genre utilization, the researcher’s aim remains to generate a theory to explore a subject matter in which little is known. The following brief history of grounded theory provides insight into how the methodology came to be.
Grounded theory began as a direct response to tensions growing between quantitative and qualitative research within the field of Sociology in the 1960s (Charmaz, 2014). Specifically, inductive research shifted from life histories and case studies to participant observations (Mills & Birks, 2014). However, the accompanying methodology needed to be codified in a structured way that enabled researchers to apply analytic strategies to their studies. Through publishing the seminal text, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* in 1967, Glaser and Strauss refocused qualitative research on analysis methods (Birks & Mills, 2015). They applied these methods to dying hospitalized patients and attempted to learn not only how and when they became aware of their terminal statuses but also how they handled the news. By applying explicit analytic treatment to the data and producing analyses, Glaser and Strauss utilized ideas in long conversations to construct analyses of dying through systematic methodological strategies (Mills & Birks, 2014). They would continue to develop grounded theory while also teaching students who would become known as the *second-generation of grounded theorists*.

Shortly after the publication of their seminal text, Glaser and Strauss pursued independent projects, taking grounded theory in opposite directions (Birks & Mills, 2015). In the early 1970s, Glaser, remaining true to the original elements of grounded theory, shifted his focus onto factors that contribute to theoretical sensitivity, a conceptual staple that I will further develop in a later section. His additional work on grounded theory as a research methodology led to publishing his seminal text *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Theory of Grounded Theory* in 1978.

With Corbin, Strauss began to work on “concrete strategies for using grounded theory methods,” which led to the introduction of the new genre, evolved grounded theory (Birks &
Mills, 2015, p. 108). Focusing on evaluation criteria that addressed the research process, they published *The Basics of Qualitative Analysis* in 1990. Glaser’s response to this text included criticism that their proposed procedures “force data and analysis into preconceived categories, ignore emergence, and result in ‘full conceptual description,’ not grounded theory” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 11). Additionally, several grounded theory researchers suggested that Glaser’s publicly hostile reception toward evolved grounded theory derived from his interpretation that this new genre forced data and analysis into biased categories (Charmaz, 2014).

Another genre deviation from traditional grounded theory, constructivist grounded theory, was developed by Kathy Charmaz, a second-generation grounded theorist (Charmaz, 2014). Utilizing a different philosophical framework, Charmaz began to emphasize meaning as being located in an individual's mind. Her approach acknowledges the researcher's position about the participants and data where the researcher, implicit in the process, is expected to co-construct experiences and meaning with participants instead of remaining a distant expert (Charmaz, 2014). Presently, grounded theory studies can be modeled after any of the three genres (Daly-Cano et al., 2015; Kimball et al., 2016), with researchers free to select specific elements necessary to address a research question.

**Constructivist Grounded Theory**

As previously briefly mentioned in the history of grounded theory, constructivist grounded theory was developed in direct response to the positivistic elements of Glaser and Strauss’ original iteration of the grounded theory methodology. This methodology does not center around the idea of a neutral observer who is a value-free expert (Mills & Birks, 2016). Instead, the researcher is expected to reflect upon and embrace their privileges and
preconceptions and how both will shape data analysis and how these elements directly influence the ability to shape how any facts are identified (Charmaz, 2014).

Constructivist grounded theory, according to Charmaz (2014), requires a researcher to begin a study with “the assumption that social reality is multiple, processual, and constructed” (p. 13), supporting the need for their position and perspective to remain embedded within the study. Clark (2005) further emphasized this updated position of the researcher by underscoring that research participation is constructed, not given, and through this lens, stated that the researcher’s reflexivity nurtures their actions and decisions throughout the inquiry. Charmaz’s (2014) deliberate use of constructivist as the identifying feature of their version of grounded theory acknowledged subjectivity and the researcher’s involvement in the construction and interpretation of collected data.

One of the core benchmarks of constructivist grounded theory is the relationship between a researcher’s ability to know and learn. Constructivist grounded theorists “view knowing and learning as embedded in social life” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 14). It is important to note that though constructivist grounded theory emphasizes the role of the researcher in a significantly different way when compared to other iterations, all forms of grounded theory begin “with inductive logic, subject data to rigorous comparative analysis, aim to develop theoretical analyses” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 15) and end with a proposal for informing policy and practice. Charmaz (2014) viewed grounded theory as a constellation of methods where elements from multiple iterations can be adopted to address a study’s research questions fully.

**Grounded Theory Methodology and Methods**

The following sections present a detailed description of the grounded theory methodology, including the necessary steps that went into planning this study. A detailed
description of sites and sampling follows this section. Next, access, role, and reciprocity within this study are described. The Chapter continues with an explanation of data generation and collection and data analysis procedures. Of particular importance are theoretical sensitivity and memo writing, two integral elements of the grounded theory methodology, which are elaborated upon within this section. The Chapter concludes with a summary of the application of constructivist grounded theory towards furthering the understanding of disability within a one stop setting.

Planning the Study

According to Birks and Mills (2015), it is imperative that the research questions embedded within this study support the constructivist grounded theory goal of explaining a phenomenon from the perspective and in the context of those who experience it. The hallmark of this inquiry is that the theory is abstracted from, or grounded in, the data that the researcher collects (Charmaz, 2014). In order to ensure a proper grounded theory study, this abstraction must be demonstrable (Charmaz, 2017). There are several stages in planning a grounded theory study which will be described in detail within this Chapter.

The first stage is the researcher’s acknowledgment of assumptions (Charmaz, 2014). This stage involves the realization that generating theory depends on the researcher’s ability to become theoretically sensitive to concepts within the data (Birks & Mills, 2015). Additionally, a balance between remaining open-minded to participants' responses while exercising the ability to identify theoretically significant concepts is necessary to avoid the imposition of preconceived notions that may seek to impact the development of theory adversely. Acknowledging assumptions, experience, and overall knowledge of the subject matter can be completed through memoing, which will be further developed in a later section.
Within the initial stage of planning a grounded theory study, Birks and Mills (2015) identified several assumptions that require development. These assumptions include (1) the researcher’s philosophical position and how it influences and relates to the area of inquiry; (2) the breadth of knowledge already known by the researcher on the area of inquiry; (3) expectations of the study; and (4) apprehensions, concerns, or fears as they pertain to the potential limitations of the study. Upon reflection on these assumptions, a researcher moves to the next stage, which is the clarification of the research question and aims of the inquiry. Once understood, a complete review of the relevant literature is conducted to enhance theoretical sensitivity and constriction of a source of future theoretical codes.

**Positionality**

Situating myself and my role within this study is a hallmark of qualitative research (Patton, 2002). A researcher must understand their philosophical positioning in conjunction with these manifestations of individual attitudes. Birks and Mills (2015) further emphasized that a researcher’s approach to grounded theory is influenced by the grounded theorists they model their work after, as well as understanding which stage in their research they were in. A successfully implemented grounded theory study requires a specific skill set of the principal researcher. Corbin and Strauss (2008) asserted that the following conditions foster quality: (1) self-awareness, (2) clarity of purpose, (3) commitment to hard work, and (4) internal motivation to perform research. My involvement and role in the co-construction of meaning with research participants was a critical defining element of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). I am positioned as an individual with a professional background in enrollment management, student affairs, and one stops. As such, my presence in this study required thoughtful reflection. I have served postsecondary students for approximately two decades, and within this time, I have
witnessed the relationship between institutions and students evolve. The delivery of information and support for students significantly differed from the models utilized when I began working in this professional field. What has remained the same, however, is the desire to meet the needs of the students.

Recently, I grew to understand how insufficient my knowledge of people with disabilities was, including my perceived ability to support students with disabilities. This questioned whether I possessed the adequate resources to identify as a student-serving professional. Through a series of Disability Studies courses, I became immersed in the reality these individuals face, including the deep-seated forms of discrimination that occur because of a lack of consistent and standardized training. The Disability Studies literature is rich with accounts of professionals who share their lack of understanding of disability laws and experience working directly with students who identify as having a disability as creating internal dissonance (Burgstahler et al., 2009; Leake et al., 2014; Vaccaro et al., 2015; Yssel et al., 2016). Presently, I consider myself significantly more educated on the history of the disability rights movement and the intricate and laborious process of how students seek accommodations for support at varying levels of education. Nevertheless, this wealth of knowledge did not situate me as a member of the population with which I endeavored to conduct research.

Furthermore, my role within this study was that of an individual who does not currently identify as having a disability. With the Disability Studies framework, Goodley (2017) would identify me as temporarily able-bodied, as all individuals who live long enough will undoubtedly experience a disability. This places me as an outsider, but this designation may change someday. Answering the research questions and generating theories within this role required additional signs of good faith and support to the participants who may hold reservations about opening up
to me. Postsecondary students, with or without disabilities, are far from monolithic, requiring nimble and participant-specific actions on my part to work towards addressing possible reservations. Central within all of my efforts, however, was the anticipated final product that privileged the experiences of this marginalized group, situating them at the forefront of inquiry, all in the spirit of improving the quality of the support provided. This section continues with a brief overview of methodological congruence.

**Methodological Congruence**

Birks and Mills (2015) explained that methodological congruence exists at the center of an individual researcher’s philosophical position, the established aims of a research project, and the guiding methodological approach. Coherence between all three elements establishes credibility by constructing a sturdy anchor and foundation (Birks & Mills, 2015, p. 36) and fortifying the value of research findings. Establishing methodological congruence requires the researcher to complete specific pre-study work. This study included engendering trust among potential participants and those likely to benefit from the study, reflecting on possible limitations and openly acknowledging that philosophical inconsistencies may arise and need to be rectified. This trust is a third factor in establishing quality that addresses a researcher’s procedural precision.

**Institutional Research Board**

This study was submitted and approved by Chapman University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB; Appendix A) and abided by the three core principles identified in the Belmont Report to ensure ethical considerations: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (McMillan, 2016). The first principle, respect for persons, emphasizes that participants should be thoroughly informed of their decision to participate. Respect in this study was initiated with the execution of
the informed consent process that included clear and precise language regarding the study. In accordance with the federal Office of Human Research Protections (McMillan, 2016), this included providing descriptions of (a) the purpose of the study, (b) any reasonably foreseeable risks for participants, (c) how the confidentiality of data will be handled, and (d) a clear statement that emphasizes the voluntary nature of participation, stressing no consequences for participants to end or discontinue their participation.

Beneficence, or a researcher’s obligation to protect participants, follows two guidelines: do not harm participants and maximize possible benefits while minimizing potential harm (McMillan, 2016). Participants were not placed in situations where they were subject to physical harm; however, psychological, social, and reputation risks can be possible concerns in educational research. During each interview, careful measures, including clear, concise language when referring to the study and consistent review of body language, were exercised to assess comfort and mitigate these risks. In order to collect sufficient data necessary for an integrated and comprehensive grounded theory, participants needed to share as much as they could about their interactions with one stop service utilization. For this reason, participants were encouraged to remain cognizant of their comfort levels, stressing that there would be no consequences for a lack of response if they did not feel comfortable answering one or several interview questions.

Quintessentially serving as a means of enforcing fairness, the final principle, justice, is obtained through the benefits of the research project that future students with disabilities may experience. Ultimately, this study will use the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities to understand better the experience of utilizing support services from one stops. Daly-Cano et al. (2015) determined that the self-advocacy needs of students with disabilities are high due to a staggering lack of knowledge on behalf of college and university staff and faculty. The
efforts put in place by a group of students within a small region serves to begin to address these changes at a much larger scale nationwide. Therefore, at this point in developing a grounded theory study, it is critical to address site and sampling to ensure all assumptions are accounted.

Site and Sampling

The study simultaneously addressed the experiences of postsecondary students while contributing to scholarly literature about one stops. Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated that a successful site should have realistic entry and a high probability of building relationships with participants towards credible and quality data while maintaining ethical conduct. In order to fully address my research questions, this study opened its site and sampling to three individual four-year public postsecondary research institutions. The size of the institution’s student body was not considered for site selection; however, it was referenced as needed during data analysis.

Potential institutions for inclusion possessed the following defining elements: (a) presence of a one stop student service center, (b) utilization of a disability resource center, and (c) being located in the state of California. The operation and utilization of a one stop is a critical central aspect of this study. Therefore, institutions needed an established one stop to be included. Similarly, participants needed to attend an institution with a disability resource center to ensure steady recruitment. As previously stated, several laws and regulations are in place to protect students with disabilities; the existence of a disability resource center provided an opportunity to seek out interested interviewees. In a later section, these privacy concerns that impact the recruitment of postsecondary students with disabilities will be elaborated upon.

Three institutions were identified as possible sites for collecting samples within California. Brief descriptions of each of the three sites where participants were actively enrolled
are included below. Please note that pseudonyms were used for all universities and all persons interviewed.

**Participating Universities**

Fallarbor University is a medium-to-large sized public, four-year research public land-grant university located in California. The student population is approximately 85% undergraduates and 15% graduate students. Fallarbor University’s one stop serves undergraduate and graduate students with the following enrollment management services: financial aid, records and registration, and student business services. The one stop supports undergraduate admissions related inquiries; however, graduate-level admissions are handled exclusively in their graduate division. The one stop is located on the first floor of a building dedicated to various student services. It is located near one of the many campus entrances. The one stop offers in-person, phone, and email support; an appointment system is utilized for students who visit in person. Their hours of operation are Mondays through Fridays from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM.

Littleroot University is a small-to-medium sized public, four-year research public land-grant research university located in California. The student population is approximately 90% undergraduates and 10% graduate students. Littleroot University’s one stop supports undergraduate and graduate students with the following enrollment management-related services: financial aid, records and registration, and student business services. The one stop supports undergraduate admissions related inquiries; however, graduate-level admissions are handled exclusively in their graduate division. The one stop is located on the first floor of an administrative building, including designated lecture halls and discussion breakout rooms. It is situated between the direct center of campus and one of many campus entrances. The one stop offers in-person, phone, email, and virtual support (a chat agent that students can communicate
Slateport University is a large public research university located in California. The student population is approximately 90% undergraduates and 10% graduate students. Slateport University’s one stop supports undergraduate and graduate students with the following enrollment management-related services: admissions (both undergraduate and graduate), financial aid, records and registration, and cashier services. The one stop is located directly in the center of the campus, in a building that solely provides enrollment management and student service support. The one stop offers in-person, phone, email, and virtual support; an appointment system is utilized for students who visit in person. The one stop also includes a robust virtual one stop website that provides students with receiving support with enrollment needs without needing phone or email support. Their hours of operation are Mondays through Fridays from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM.

**Participant Recruitment and Selection**

A grounded theory study traditionally begins with purposive sampling, in which an initial participant deemed relevant to an area of study is selected for review (Leavy, 2017). The safety and respect of the participants were the utmost priority when completing this study. In conjunction with other examples that center on postsecondary students with disabilities (Miller, 2015), several risks merited assessment. Students with disabilities have reported fearing stigmatization when disclosing their disabilities and addressing the deficiencies of their institutions (Kendall, 2016; Leake et al., 2014; Safer et al., 2020). This fear may prevent them from feeling comfortable with opening up. These challenges required careful attention to fully
developed protocols for reciprocity, trustworthiness, and rapport with participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

**Accessing Potential Participants**

Marshall and Rossman (2016) addressed the intricacies of the process of gaining access as requiring “time, patience, and sensitivity to the rhythms and norms of a group” (p. 122). Success in recruiting participants began with contacting the disability resource office at universities having a one stop. These offices served as an initial point of contact between potential student participants and me. Ultimately, support from these individuals significantly improved my credibility when reaching out to participants, as they directly disseminated the research study invitation through focused email messages. Within each institution, these identified gatekeepers were not directly involved with the institution’s one stop. No site included a one stop model where the disability resource center was a subsidiary department within the institution’s one stop model.

The entry email was delivered to the head figure of each site’s disability resource center (see Appendix B). This message introduced the study, outlined the requested support for participant recruitment, and clarified Chapman University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to proceed. The request also emphasized the level of concern for the safety and respect of each participant built into the study. Disability resource centers can be safe havens for vulnerable members of a marginalized population (Harbour, 2009). The relationship between these professionals and their students is worthy of veneration, and the request to gain access is needed to assure my intentions of protecting and respecting participants.

As a point of clarification, students who did not disclose their disability to their institutions were eligible for participation. However, the ability to recruit these individuals was
impossible through disability resource offices (Pearson & Samura, 2017). Whenever possible, an attempt was made to recruit from this particular population of students through snowball sampling (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Specifically, upon completion of each interview, each participant was asked if they were aware of any peers who disclosed to them that they had a disability that was not reported to the University and might be interested in participating in the study. Recruited participants did not provide additional contact information for potential individuals who did not disclose their disabilities with their institution. Thus, all participants were registered with their university’s disability resource center.

**Participant Inclusion Criteria**

Participation in this study was contingent upon meeting several criteria. First, participants must have been actively enrolled students at a postsecondary institution that operated a one stop to deliver student service support. The service departments represented by the one stop needed to provide integrated support for offices such as financial aid, registrar, and student business services. An organizational structure where generalists provided first-level support to students, with specialists handling escalated inquiries, had to be in place. Additionally, the one stop needed to host services critical to students’ success from matriculation to graduation.

Participants were individuals who identified as having a disability, regardless of whether their disability was disclosed to their home institution for accommodated support. In this study, all participants disclosed at least one disability identity to their institution’s disability resource center; however, several participants indicated that they were also aware of undiagnosed disabilities they possessed. Participants were encouraged to provide context regarding both diagnosed and undiagnosed disabilities. Additionally, in some instances, participants shared that they did not fully disclose all diagnosed disabilities with their institution, citing fear of potential
retribution as a major concern. Participants were encouraged to provide as much information regarding how their undiagnosed disabilities factored into their one stop experience. There was no limitation regarding a specific category of disability or disabilities in instances where a student identifies as having more than one disability. It was a requirement, however, that the student’s experience within higher education was influenced by their disability. There was no requirement to verify testing to support any self-reported disability identity.

The final inclusion criterion ensured that the data collected was relevant to the direction of the research questions. In order to be included, participants were adults who had personal experience utilizing the one stop at their institution to receive support. This study’s research questions required first-hand knowledge of an institution’s support services. The degree to which they had utilized the one stop was not evaluated prior to data collection but became integral in understanding their experiences. Individuals who expressed interest in participating and met all inclusion criteria were sent a formal recruitment email (see Appendix C).

**Participant Reciprocity**

In taking part in this study, participants offered their time to share stories and answer interview questions centering on their experiences utilizing one stops. Marshall and Rossman (2016) emphasized that deciding to participate may require an adjustment of priorities and routines. Postsecondary students, in particular, often juggle several curricular and co-curricular responsibilities, and I am indebted to those that offered themselves. At the conclusion of the study, as detailed below, participants were compensated with an electronic $25 Amazon gift card, emailed to their student email address, for their time as a token of appreciation. Time is valuable, and although this study was of significant importance to the researcher, participants were not expected to donate their time with no reward.
Participant Descriptions

Sixteen participants were selected to be a part of this study. As a first step, participants were asked to complete a demographic screener, which included questions about their disability identity, age, grade level, gender identity, sexuality, and race/ethnicity (see Appendix D). The 16 participants ranged in age from 18 to 44. Thirteen were undergraduates: one first-year, two second-year, three third-year, and seven fourth-year students. The remaining three students were graduate students. Participants defined their gender in their own words, which generated eight possible identities. Ten participants identified as female, but responses included cis female, female/nonbinary, and female/woman. Two participants identified as male. Three participants identified as non-binary, of which one identified as non-binary/female. One participant identified as a transfemale. Participants shared their sexuality and were selected from one of seven possible options or were given the option not to answer.

All 16 participants reported their sexuality. Of the 16 participants, one identified as asexual, three identified as bisexual, one identified as gay/lesbian, seven identified as heterosexual, one identified as pansexual, two identified as queer, and one participant identified as two-spirit. Participants were also asked to share their race/ethnicity and were given the option not to answer. Fifteen students reported their race/ethnicity; one noted that they preferred not to answer. Of the 15 students that identified their race/ethnicity, two identified as Asian, one identified as Black or African American, seven identified as Hispanic/Latinx, one identified as Native American/Alaska Native/First Nations, one identified as two or more races, and three identified as White. Please see Table 1 for a summary of participant demographics.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Gender Identity</th>
<th>Sexuality</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Fourth Year Senior</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>Hispanic/Latinx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbie</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
<td>Female/nonbinary</td>
<td>Pansexual</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bri</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Third Year Student</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Black or African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celina</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Fourth Year Senior</td>
<td>Cis Female</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Hispanic/Latinx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chara</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Fourth Year Senior</td>
<td>Trans female</td>
<td>Asexual</td>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demi</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Fourth Year Senior</td>
<td>Female/woman</td>
<td>Gay/Lesbian</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Two or more races: Asian, Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dev</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Second Year Sophomore</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Fourth Year Senior</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Hispanic/Latinx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Fourth Year Senior</td>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayne</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Third Year Junior</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Hispanic/Latinx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Grade Level</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitsune</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Fourth Year</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Hispanic/Latinx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>Hispanic/Latinx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May Jones</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Second Year</td>
<td>Non-Binary,</td>
<td>Two-Spirit</td>
<td>Native American, Alaska Native, First Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasha</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>Hispanic/Latinx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As this study focused on the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities, it was critical to understand how participants identified themselves as people with disabilities. Participants were asked to report both diagnosed and undiagnosed disability identities they possessed. Of the 16 participants, five identified as only having one singular disability identity, and eleven identified one or more disability identities. Eight participants identified as having attention deficit hyperactive disorder. Three participants identified as having Autism. Six identified as having a learning disability. Two participants identified as having a speech-related disability. Four participants identified as having a health-related disability. Nine participants identified as having a mental health condition. Three participants identified as having a mobility-related disability. One participant identified as having severe test anxiety. One participant identified as being blind or visually impaired. One participant identified as being Deaf or hard of hearing. One participant identified as having a language disorder. Table 2 describes disability identities as self-reported by participants.
Table 2

*Participant Disability Identity Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Disability Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra</td>
<td>Learning disability, mental health condition, mobility-related disability, language disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbie</td>
<td>Attention deficit hyperactive disorder, autism spectrum disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bri</td>
<td>Blind or visually impaired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celina</td>
<td>Mental health condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chara</td>
<td>Attention deficit, Autism, Learning disability, Speech-related disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demi</td>
<td>Health-related disability, Learning disability, Mental health condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>Mental Health Condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dev</td>
<td>Deaf or hard of hearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald</td>
<td>Attention deficit hyperactive disorder, learning disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake</td>
<td>Health-related disability, Mental health condition, Mobility-related disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayne</td>
<td>Attention deficit hyperactive disorder, severe test anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitsune</td>
<td>Attention deficit hyperactive disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>Attention deficit hyperactive disorder, health-related disability, learning disability, mental health condition, mobility-related disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Health-related disability, Learning disability, Mental health condition, Speech-related disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Disability Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May Jones</td>
<td>Autism Spectrum Disorder, Mental health condition, Attention deficit hyperactive disorder (undiagnosed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasha</td>
<td>Attention deficit hyperactive disorder, Mental health condition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following participant descriptions include data extracted from semi-structured interviews and are written to provide relevant background information regarding participants’ self-awareness as postsecondary students with disabilities. When possible, information regarding participants’ multiple intersecting identities, including their awareness of their role as a postsecondary student, is included.

**Alexandra.** Alexandra is a 21-year-old fourth-year student at Littleroot University. She identified as a Hispanic/Latinx bisexual female. Alexandra defined her disability identity as being the culmination of a learning disability, mental health conditions, a mobility-related disability, and a language disorder (which she identified as ‘a weakness in receptive language’). When asked to provide more information beyond what was provided on the interview screener, she laughed and responded, “Yeah. Gosh, I feel like I have so much… I have, let's see…” She further elaborated that she also had psoriatic arthritis and fibromyalgia, both posing a direct negative impact on her ability to be physically present in class during flare-ups. Although she was comfortable sharing about her disabilities for this study, she mentioned she did not generally refer to her disabilities. She said, “I don't really talk about my disability much because I don't like it to be the forefront of who I am.” When asked to elaborate further, she concluded, “Yeah, I'm disabled, but I still work harder than a lot of other people, and I get much better results.” Alexandra understood that seeking and utilizing accommodations was her responsibility and
generally remained on top of communicating her needs each semester. She shared that she did miss the mandated window to report her request for additional support and services for the current academic term and explained the negative consequences she experienced. She began her undergraduate program of study during the COVID-19 pandemic and held strong opinions on the increased support and accessibility she experienced during this period. Nevertheless, she exemplified the spirit of a confident undergraduate, sharing detailed recounts of her attempts to receive one stop support.

**Barbie.** Barbie is a 34-year-old seventh-year doctoral student at Littleroot University. They identified as a White, non-binary/female pansexual. Barbie shared that their disability identity reported to Littleroot University was not accurate to their understanding of their disability identity but feared adverse consequences to their personal life in seeking full-range support. They noted that they had attention deficit hyperactive disorder, and this was the sole disability their accommodations addressed. They shared that they also had autism spectrum disorder, but because they were a mother of two small children, they worried that a formal diagnosis posed a threat to their ability to remain a full-time student and a full-time parent. They spoke critically and in explicit detail and highlighted the multiple ways they felt they failed to receive the support necessary to succeed, both from enrollment and academic services. An avid participant in recent student-organized strikes against the University, Barbie perceived retaliation from administrators and shared personal stories where they received misogynistic comments on more than one occasion. Nevertheless, Barbie’s awareness of their struggles empowered them to share a wealth of recommendations and feedback for university-wide improvements.

**Bri.** Bri is a 20-year-old third-year student at Littleroot University. She identified as a Black or African American heterosexual female. Bri also shared that her disability identity was
that she was blind and visually impaired. Being a lifelong condition, Bri struggled with vision throughout her primary, secondary, and postsecondary experiences. Appropriate prescription eyewear and modified textbooks with larger print have been staples for her ability to succeed academically, and she shared that Littleroot University continued to support her as a postsecondary student with a disability. Soft-spoken and direct, Bri responded to all interview questions without feeling the need to include additional details. Her positive demeanor and spirit reflected her overall satisfaction with Littleroot University.

Celina. Celina was a 21-year-old fourth-year student at Fallarbor University. She identified as a cisgender, Hispanic/Latinx, heterosexual female. When asked to describe her disability identity, she indicated she has a mental health condition that was diagnosed in her sophomore year of high school. Still, she chose to refrain from identifying explicit details. She indicated, however, that her accommodations at Fallarbor University assisted in reducing anxiety and stress that adversely impacted her academic performance. She stated she enjoyed her time at the tail end of her postsecondary journey. Celina was one of many participants who began her first year remotely due to curriculum delivery restrictions that followed the COVID-19 pandemic. She acknowledged that although she considered her transition from secondary to postsecondary education smooth, she regretted not participating in on-campus housing her first year, a staple of what she referred to as the traditional college experience she sought. Outspoken and articulate, Celina shared experiences in and out of the one stop with a fearless gusto. She stressed that her self-awareness grew from learning that resources were available for students who acted in their interest. She wished her peers “would advocate for themselves because I know this university has money. And I know that they can help support their students. It's just you just have to go to them and just annoy them a little bit.”
**Chara.** Chara (key-are-uh) was a 21-year-old third-year student at Littleroot University (although they were proud to share that they had the academic class standing of a fourth-year student due to their ability to take on increased academic course loads). They preferred to exclude their race and ethnicity in the interview screener but identified as an asexual trans female. Chara identified as an individual with autism spectrum disorder, attention-deficit hyperactive disorder, a learning disability, and a speech disability. Chara began their time at Littleroot University during the COVID-19 pandemic and recalled specific exceptions to policies being granted to students during the beginning of their program dissipating over the years. They shared that this change confused expectations of them as a student and the university’s ability to support them. With an infectious laugh that preceded most of her responses, Chara shared that they felt connected to the Littleroot University community and freely communicated and collaborated with fellow peers, faculty, and staff. They addressed that due to their multiple disabilities, they constantly approached barriers to their success academically, which required additional support and resources. They also shared that Littleroot University’s disability resource center delayed their ability to obtain accommodations, adversely impacting their current relationship with the department’s team.

**Demi.** Demi was a 24-year-old fourth-year student at Slateport University. She identified as a White Lesbian woman. Demi shared that she was diagnosed with multiple disabilities, including a health-related disability (inflammatory bowel disorder, IBD), a learning disability, and a mental health condition. Most of her responses focused on her IBD, as complications from this disorder contributed heavily to barriers impacting her ability to succeed as a postsecondary student. Demi shared that she frequently struggled with accepting her disability identity, as she tended to focus most of her perception of disability on those with physical and present
impairments. A Women’s Studies major with a penchant for art, Demi embodied the spirit of a commuter student – a limited connection to the campus beyond mandatory services and curricular obligations. Demi shared that she was an on-campus student employee at her University, which she attributed to greatly impacting her ability to understand the customer service expectations of her fellow students. She was the only participant who did not rely on federal financial aid funding to cover either her cost of attendance or her living expenses. Negative faculty interactions prevented her from pursuing a formal study in the arts. Still, following the completion of her undergraduate studies later this year, she shared that she anticipates enrolling in community college courses to get back to practicing her passion.

**Denise.** Denise was a 30-year-old second-year doctoral student at Littleroot University. She identified as a heterosexual female of two or more races, specifically Asian and Hispanic/Latinx. Before meeting Denise, she shared on the interview screener that her disability identity was a mental health condition. During our conversation, she shared that she suffered from anxiety and depression and that both conditions negatively impacted her ability to succeed as a student. When asked to describe her experience as a doctoral student at Littleroot University, she shared, in a soft, almost defeated demeanor, “It's been a bit rough. I'm actually not enjoying it at all. I expected maybe a more welcoming community and inclusive community. So yeah, not really having a good time.” Denise shared that the root of her lack of satisfaction extends beyond enrollment and student services, though she was very comfortable sharing her dissatisfaction with both. Denise experienced a traumatic incident with a rejection by her doctoral advisor, which caused her to lose momentum, as well as her footing, in the program. Understandably, this experience placed a negative lens on all Littleroot University services, and Denise carefully addressed the various additional instances in which she felt failed by the community.
Dev. Dev was a 19-year-old second-year student at Littleroot University and identified as an Asian bisexual female. Dev was identified as being deaf and hard of hearing, with a speech impediment that originated from delayed oral communication development. She shared that her identity as a deaf individual led to many negative experiences at Littleroot University and cited multiple instances of fellow students refraining from developing deep relationships with her. However, she shared that she remained committed and supported by friends she made when she started her program. She elaborated on the critical ability for her to see individuals physically speaking, as she relied on lip reading when communicating with others. An increase in virtual learning, a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, led her to conclude that many students who do not have audible concerns failed to understand how much harder it is for deaf or hard-of-hearing students to succeed in virtual settings. She strongly emphasized delayed captioning services and dependence on possible low-quality microphones as barriers to virtual learning. Succinct when speaking, she maintained a calm exterior. Dev considered herself her biggest support system and spent most of her secondary and postsecondary education advocating for the resources and support necessary for her success. One example of the lengths she went to for her success was her decision to sell her car to cover her tuition balance.

Gerald. Gerald was a 20-year-old fourth-year second-generation student at Littleroot University. He identified as a Hispanic/Latinx heterosexual male. He spoke about how coming to terms with his disability identity proved to be a difficult experience for him and that he continued to struggle with unlearning the deeply rooted stigmatization associated with having received curricular accommodations. He shared that he identified as an individual with attention deficit hyperactive disorder, as well as an additional learning disorder that he did not elaborate upon. Although Gerald chose to be discrete with his disability identity, he shared that his current
supervisor, aware of his ADHD, requested that he speak on behalf of his disability. He shared, “I'm part of a regional center, and this lady that helps me out, she wants me to talk openly about it, make sure I'm proud. Proud of it like “yeah, I have this disability.” He stressed that his concern with speaking about his disability was that he would be misunderstood. Many of Gerald’s responses underscored this concern with how others perceived him, ranging from his peers to faculty and even his family. Fortunately, Gerald’s commitment to sharing stories of his lived experience in a confidential, safe space allowed him to speak freely about the highs and lows of his postsecondary journey. He anticipated an additional year to complete his program but accepted that although his timeline is nontraditional, he was on the path toward becoming an engineer.

Jake. Jake was a 24-year-old fourth-year student at Slateport University. They identified as a White, queer, non-binary person. Jake shared that they had multiple intersecting disability identities, some of which were formally diagnosed during their first attempt at pursuing a bachelor’s degree. Specifically, Jake shared that they had Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (a group of hereditary connective tissue disorders), which required the use of a wheelchair for all mobility needs. They identified as having dyslexia and dysautonomia. These diagnoses occurred simultaneously with their decision to transition. Jake exuded playful confidence when sharing the highs and lows of their experiences at Slateport University. Emphasizing that their “large, hard-to-miss wheelchair” became a key identifier of them as a person, Jake shared that many peers informed them of their shared course enrollments, “They will be like, ‘oh, I have class with you’ and I'm like, ‘oh, everyone recognizes me, and I don't know them.’” Jake shared that they were dedicated to not only completing their undergraduate studies but often participated in any opportunities to share feedback regarding campus-wide resources. Unfortunately, Jake has been
met with many forms of direct and indirect discrimination, from extracurricular sports restrictions to limited workplace responsibilities. They developed a strong relationship with multiple student-serving departments at Slateport University, including the University’s disability resource center and one of the LGBTQIA student community centers.

**Jayne.** Jayne was a 20-year-old third-year student at Littleroot University who identified as a Hispanic/Latinx Heterosexual female. Jayne selected attention-deficit/hyperactive disorder as her disability identity but also submitted a write-in response of ‘severe test anxiety’ as an additional disability identity. Jayne was also the only participant who utilized the support of a full-time service animal, her dog, Peter. Jayne repeatedly referred to Peter as a constant, physical presence and noted that their relationship was paramount to her comfort. In addition to Peter, Jayne relied on a series of stimulating objects and tasks she called her ‘toolbox’ to ground herself during stressful situations. Although Peter was a visible outlet of her disability identity, she shared that she was very private when speaking about her ADHD and test anxiety. She indicated that she does not talk to anyone about her disability identity unless there is a need-to-know basis established. Jayne, who, within minutes of the interview, lived up to the ‘old soul energy’ she purported to have, volunteered her perception of an individual’s manners when she responded to any question. She evaluated the experience of receiving support on a scale of politeness and etiquette and established her preference for a personal touch to drive all transactions. Jayne shared that she was determined to become a physician, and her success at Littleroot University was critical in guaranteeing she completed appropriate prerequisites and established successful postsecondary academic habits.

**Kitsune.** Kitsune was an 18-year-old first-year student at Littleroot University. He identified as an Asian, heterosexual male. Kitsune indicated that his disability identity centered
on his attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, which he attributed as the root of many of his intricate daily routines and rituals necessary for his success. The interview with Kitsune took place during his first semester of undergraduate studies, and his responses were very telling of the first-year experience of an on-campus student. Kitsune spoke often about his self-proclaimed lack of direction. He mentioned that he was easily lost in both physical directions and in organizational thinking. He also shared that he relied heavily on his relationships with established members of the Littleroot University community to navigate his surroundings better. His responses also referenced his resident advisor (RA) as providing clear instructions for acquiring support services. Kitsune embodied an eagerness that seemingly underscored his excitement to provide his feedback utilizing one stop support services.

**Liam.** Liam was a 44-year-old fourth-year student at Slateport University. She identified as a Hispanic/Latinx heterosexual female. Liam indicated that she was diagnosed with Attention-Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, a health-related disability, a learning disability, a mental health condition, and mobility-related disabilities. When she shared her experiences, Liam referred to “non-standard, outright disabilities.” She provided multiple examples of limitations she has experienced, including being unable to secure appropriate seating arrangements for her classes due to inconsistent support from Slate University’s disability resource center and facilities department. She also required the use of a wheelchair and cane at various points of her enrollment due to temporary physical impairments. Liam also shared that she was very sensitive to scents and odors and elaborated that this restricted her from accessing certain offices due to individual fragrance-spreading items. Liam also described herself as a student veteran who was in the process of obtaining additional services and support from the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. Deeply unsatisfied with her experience at Slateport University, Liam was
comfortable when she provided multiple examples of areas where she felt let down by services and resources. One major positive element of their postsecondary experience was the camaraderie she developed with a handful of her peers, whose support she experienced both in and out of the classroom.

**Maria.** Maria was a 28-year-old first-year graduate student at Slateport University. They identified as a Hispanic/Latinx, queer, non-binary person. Maria identified as having a health-related disability, a learning disability, a mental health condition, and a speech-related disability. During our interview, they shared that they also experienced on-again-off-again physical impairments that led to an undiagnosed mobility-related disability. They shared that they experienced anxiety and depression on regular cycles, which impacted their ability to participate fully with the Slateport University community. Maria was also a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) student and expressed that most of their one stop experiences centered around the challenges and barriers they faced due to their immigration status. Additionally, Maria received significant support from the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DOR), which played a role in how they experienced receiving specific enrollment service support. Maria was a student at Slateport University for their undergraduate program and described their experiences utilizing student support services during both enrollment periods. Softspoken but community-driven, Maria understood the importance of postsecondary institutions being safe, comfortable spaces for all students, including those who required additional support.

**May Jones.** May Jones was a 19-year-old second-year student at Littleroot University. They identified as a Native American/Alaska Native/First Nations, two-spirit, non-binary person. When asked about their disability identity, May Jones shared that they had autism spectrum disorder and a mental health condition. These are two diagnosed disabilities for which May
Jones secured documentation for curricular accommodations. They also shared that they believed they had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. However, they stressed that this is undiagnosed and did not elaborate on why they never pursued a formal diagnosis. May Jones strongly identified as a queer individual. They described facing discrimination from peers and administrators who used divisive, derogatory language in their presence and shared their shock that such behavior existed in an academic space. May Jones sat comfortably at the intersection of all their identities and said they had no concerns with speaking openly to fellow students, staff, and faculty. They often prefaced first impressions with a short and sweet description of their autism spectrum disorder identity. They emphasized that this introduction provided context for those around them to serve better/understand them.

**Sasha.** Sasha was a 31-year-old third-year non-traditional student at Slateport University. She identified as a Hispanic/Latinx bisexual female and emphasized that she wished to identify as a STEM major due to her passion and love of science. On multiple occasions, she stressed her age and the age disparity between her and most of her peers as a factor that created a barrier to her ability to create a community at Slateport University. However, she noted that being older was key to relating closely to her professors and college faculty. Sasha shared her disability identity as attention deficit disorder and a mental health condition but provided little to no details about the diagnosis of either disability. What was elaborated upon in detail, however, were the two instances in which Sasha experienced a temporary physical disability due to two separate incidents. Through these two instances, she began to view the accessibility of Slateport University. She stressed that navigating the physical campus, once previously considered easy, became increasingly difficult. A very thoughtful person, Sasha reflected before responding to interview questions and carefully ensured that the response provided fully addressed the inquiry
and adequately reflected her experiences. She shared that she has had few opportunities to provide direct feedback on her curricular and co-curricular experiences as a postsecondary student with a disability. She expressed that more students should consider contributing their experiences.

**Data Generation and Collection**

Data collection in a grounded theory study continues through analysis and theory building. Birks and Mills (2015) asserted that everything in a grounded theory study begins with the data. Charmaz (2014) reinforced this, emphasizing that the credibility of a study is “determined by the relevance, substance, scope, and depth of data” (p. 65). To ensure high-quality data, Charmaz recommended that researchers capture diverse contexts and perspectives that provide rich details regarding the participant’s views and actions beyond superficial responses. Additionally, Charmaz recommended considering the value of data and how it could be used for comparison and category generation. Birks and Mills (2015) highlighted that data collection should also come from a wide range of sources and that diversity in the use of data instills a sense of value in the grounded theory produced. There is consensus among grounded theorists that participant interviews remain the main shared data source (Chun Tie et al., 2019). Nevertheless, it remains only one of multiple data sources. Researchers who engage in diverse data collection methods, including participant observation, can triangulate their data to increase quality and rigor (Leavy, 2017).

At the outset of a grounded theory study, it is often difficult to know the nature or type of data that will assist in developing the theory, as well as the number and nature of participants needed to ensure quality. Data generated from an initial interview makes a researcher aware of issues that require additional expansion and further clarification and confirmation, beginning the
concurrent analysis process (Birks & Mills, 2015). Concurrent analysis is a cyclical process that aids in category generation and is present throughout a grounded theory study's entire data collection process. It assists in addressing gaps found in the categories as a study progresses. Sufficient time should be utilized between data generation to thoroughly consider how the data relates to the developing analysis and whether it confirms, contradicts, or expands upon the growing theory. This also assists in conceptualizing the direction the study is taking. A researcher’s awareness of thorough data collection occurs at the point of data saturation, where responses of new participants only contribute to categories and themes already determined in previous conversations. In a constructivist grounded theory study, once the first set of data are collected from the initial participant, data analysis can begin.

Marshall and Rossman (2016) introduced the notion that the success of a qualitative study lies heavily in the interpersonal skills of the researcher. A successful study required trust and rapport between me as the interviewer and all participants. The literature has documented concerns about a lack of trust between students with disabilities and postsecondary staff and faculty (Megivern et al., 2003). Both site entry and interview introduction emails laid out the study's expectations and data reporting plans for participants to review.

Establishing a rapport with participants in a grounded theory study is paramount, as identifying new themes and categories may necessitate following up (Charmaz, 2014). This is particularly important in constructivist interviewing practices, as interviews are perceived as “emergent interactions in which social bonds may develop” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 91). Without these established relationships, participants may be less inclined to continue providing insight into their lived experiences. Ease of communication and embodying the skillset of an active, patient, and thoughtful listener assist in building rapport (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). My use of
academic and industry-specific language was suspended when speaking with students to ensure comfort and comprehension, which encouraged acceptance by participants and allowed me to move towards a more resounding connection for thick data collection. In the following section, intensive interview protocols are detailed.

**Intensive Interviews**

In this study, I utilized individual intensive interviews as the central method of data collection. Charmaz (2014) defined intensive interviews as “gently-guided, one-sided conversation[s] that explore research participants’ perspectives on their personal experience with the research topic” (p. 56). This method required the selection of participants who were capable of providing first-hand knowledge on the topic that was being explored. As the research questions focused on the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities utilizing one stop services, there was no group more ideal for interviewing than the directly impacted population – the students themselves. Participants volunteered to share their experiences with their institution’s one stop through these interviews.

The literature on postsecondary students with disabilities often includes references to individual interviews as a recommended method of collecting data from postsecondary students with disabilities (Vaccaro et al., 2018). Several factors influenced the decision to utilize this data collection method in this study. First, the disclosure of a disability is a personal experience (Squires et al., 2018; Stein, 2013). Limiting the number of individuals present for conversations about the potential challenges associated with the phenomenon of a disability seeks to ensure a positive experience by excluding potential external factors from additional participants that may trigger insecurity in participant responses. Charmaz (2014) wrote that intensive interviews can create interactional spaces where participants can share their experiences. Participants who are
concerned about their responses are perceived by peers, and even those who share similar disabilities may be unwilling to contribute, which in turn hinders data collection.

Out of respect for all participants' comfort, dignity, and safety, measures were taken to create private environments. Participants were requested to identify and select an interview location that would allow them equanimity to speak freely of their experiences. Placing the power to choose the interview setting in their hands was adapted into this study to increase the likelihood of their ability to contribute effectively without concerns of unexpected external factors. Despite my being available for in-person interviews on their campus, all participants chose to have their interviews conducted over Zoom.

Additionally, this method allowed for the appropriate time each student was required to generate responses to several interview questions. This concern became more evident when participants requested additional time not only to recall and conceptualize their understanding of their institution’s one stop but also to focus on the type of support they received and the multiple delivery methods utilized. Participants required varying amounts of time to develop their thoughts and reflect on their experiences utilizing one stops. Individual interviews afforded each participant ample time to refine their impressions of their institution’s one stop, increasing the likelihood of gathering thick descriptions necessary for theoretical integration.

Charmaz (2014) underscored the purpose of intensive interviews as an opportunity for researchers to focus on their participants’ direct statements about their experiences, including how they portray their stories. I believe my strength in readily establishing positive interpersonal relationships facilitated the students' willingness to represent their stories. Through harnessing verbal and nonverbal communication skills, I began each interaction by restating the goal of the research study, outlining the interview’s agenda, and identifying the many ways to communicate
any discomfort or concern. I also probed strategically as needed, which was utilized frequently throughout data collection within this study. Throughout all 16 interviews, participants often required additional clarification, as noted by initial responses, which did not always address the purpose of each question. The combination of established candor and judicious probing provided the additional insight necessary for participants to respond to each question fully.

Interview questions varied and were thematically sorted into three categories: overall postsecondary experience, transition-into-post secondary experience, and one stop experience. This structure allowed participants to reflect on a comprehensive interpretation of their postsecondary journey before focusing on the nuances of utilizing one stop services. A copy of the research instrument is included (see Appendix E). Charmaz (2014) emphasized that the purpose of an intensive interview is to explore, not to interrogate, and this thoughtful structure promoted the exploration of relevant thoughts. Each interview began with asking softer questions, including the reaffirming of information shared on the demographic screener and casual questions about the participant’s day and well-being, which helped with building rapport and fostered progress toward more complex questions that followed.

It was critical to reemphasize that participants were informed that they were free from answering any questions they deemed harmful. Understanding and respecting consent within the interview required consistent interpretation of body language and other non-verbal cues throughout the conversation. As Charmaz (2014) recommended, I also remained cognizant of how the participants perceived me. I focused on ensuring my body language and responses to their responses did not influence the content of the interaction. At no time during data collection did a participant identify a question as being too personal; all participants answered all questions.
With the interview questions defined, the next factor in designing the study involved the length of each interview.

In consideration of the factors supporting individual intensive interviews, it was critical to ensure adequate time was scheduled for participants to address all questions. Similarly, this study required additional time at the end of the interview for participants to ask their questions and seek a greater understanding of the larger conversation that unfolded. In short, time was an invaluable resource to all participants. This study was designed with the acknowledgment that marginalized individuals may require more time when presented with an opportunity to share their experiences (Charmaz, 2014). Interviews were designed to be completed within 60 minutes, the approximate timeframe provided to all interested individuals during the recruitment process. Participants who requested additional time to complete the interview, exceeding the 60-minute window, were obliged. Only two participants asked for extra time.

Charmaz (2014) highlighted that the strength of a constructivist approach is using participant language to bridge experiences with research questions, allowing the researcher to avoid making assumptions and supporting the thoughtful development of meaning. As previously stated, all participants requested to conduct their interviews over Zoom. This decision allowed all to utilize closed captioning. As stated in the consent form provided to all participants, interviews were recorded, allowing me to focus on each student as they shared their experiences. Participants were allowed to deny the recording of each interview, but all 16 participants ultimately provided their consent for recording. Additionally, recording allowed me to take notes as needed and assisted in clarification during transcription and coding practices. Freely communicating without the need to transcribe during each interview allowed me to be more
present in these conversations and also allowed me to pick up on the participant’s terminology and semantics throughout the process.

Qualitative inquiry experts refrain from prescribing an expected number of participants needed for a successful study. As stated succinctly by Charmaz (2014), “the inherent paradox of qualitative interview projects particularly affects grounded theory studies: you are unlikely to know what you need to find out until you grapple with your data” (p. 106). This study endeavored to reach a deep analytical level, which required a substantial number of participants. Intending to interview between 15 and 25 postsecondary students with disabilities who were actively enrolled in an institution that utilizes a one stop, data saturation and theoretical integration were identified after 16 interviews.

Data Analysis Procedures

Birks and Mills (2015) asserted two rules in grounded theory data analysis: the realization that everything is a concept, and data analysis must proceed “in relation to the research question, aims, and unit of analysis planned or in the initial research design” (p. 86). To clarify, a concept is an idea that is descriptive, explanatory, and has its meaning embedded in either a word, label, or symbol (Holloway, 2008). Data analysis in grounded theory is categorical in intent, and concepts will evolve throughout the study. The application of grounded theory methods assists in developing these concepts and comparing the incident to incident, incident to code, code to code, code to a category, etc. This process, known as constant comparative analysis, is a fundamental element of the grounded theory methodology (Birks & Mills, 2015).

Birks and Mills (2015) indicated that a researcher could examine and scrutinize concepts from various angles through comparative analysis. Additionally, this practice encourages the questioning of data and their meaning through the following lenses. First, the researcher
determines what is evident in the data. This then leads them to question what could be else present. Finally, the researcher analyzes deeper to determine if something more obscure is being suggested. Constant comparative analysis generates codes, categories, and sub-categories of the data, emphasizing the abductive reasoning that leads to a “cognitive logic of discovery” (Birks & Miles, 2015, p. 12). Constant comparative analysis additionally drives conceptualization, a process that moves beyond re-describing data with other words and allows the researcher to learn more about emerging concepts. Conceptualization aids in understanding how to set concepts in the context of the unit of analysis to understand better priorities for future coding (Charmaz, 2014).

Mills and Birks (2014) defined a theory as an “explanatory scheme comprising a set of concepts related to each other through logical patterns of connectivity” (p. 108). An emerging theory must simultaneously be grounded in the data and demonstrate explanatory capacity that aids in establishing credibility in research. The primary goal of a grounded theory study is to reach a higher level of abstraction. Glaser and Strauss (1967) asserted a positivist lens on this level of abstraction of a theory. Conversely, Bryant (2009) contended that theories are contextually constrained and are not required to be speculative or universal. Theoretical integration in a grounded theory study involves the application of advanced analytical strategies that aid in elevating the conceptual levels of a phenomenon (Birks & Mills, 2015).

According to Birks and Mills (2015), there are three necessary factors for the integration of a grounded theory: (1) an identified core category, (2) theoretical saturation of major categories, and (3) an accumulated bank of analytical memos. Acting as a hub of theory development, a core category’s centralized position allows the researcher to abstract the phenomena under investigation. Once further data no longer impacts the properties or
dimensions of an established core category, a judgment is made that there is no need to collect additional data. Theoretical saturation is an abstract process.

Additionally, as previously stated, memos function as reference tools and are considered “the bedrock of theory generation” (Birks & Mills, 2015, p. 111). Corbin and Strauss (1990) and Glaser (1978) recommended sorting memos to aid in the final formation of a grounded theory, encouraging organization based on a categorical theme. Working towards theoretical sensitivity must emphasize quality and rigor, crucial elements of all qualitative research methodologies (Birks & Mills, 2015). This section continues with the grounded theory methods utilized in the data analysis of this study.

**Interview Transcription**

As previously stated, interviews are a primary data collection method of a grounded theory study (Birks & Mills, 2015). In this study, recorded transcripts of each interview were transcribed verbatim. Upon completing the initial interview, participants were emailed a copy of the transcript and asked to review and ensure that their recorded responses adequately and accurately embodied their lived experiences. Following participant approval of the transcription, data were migrated to the Excel file, maintained within one singular tab, and organized in the following manner. This Excel file and all transcription files were stored safely on a protected cloud-based drive, only accessible through a secure login. The first column identified the transcript line being coded across all 16 interviews. There was one row for each line of transcribed text, with a total of 3,311 lines. This Excel spreadsheet was used to conduct coding, as described in the next sections.
Conducting Grounded Theory Coding

The next step of data generation is coding. Charmaz (2014) defined coding as “the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data” (p. 113). Codes are a form of shorthand that allows researchers to identify conceptual reoccurrences (Birks & Mills, 2015), and grounded theory coding, in particular, is the process of “moving beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytic sense of stories, statements, and observations” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113). The coding process in this grounded theory study assisted me in identifying sensitizing concepts from the literature within participant responses.

Grounded theory coding differs from other coding forms in that codes are created directly from the data, emerging as data is scrutinized and reviewed (Charmaz, 2014). Within the larger concept of codes exist multiple deviations that address specific characteristics of the participant’s responses. Substantive codes, for example, are directly taken from the language of the data and assume one of the following two forms: gerunds and in vivo codes (Chun Tie et al., 2019). Once groups of codes are defined, they are ultimately collapsed into categories and then compared to other categories and codes throughout a study. To begin, however, coding must remain representative of the data, with the analysis occurring later in the process (Deterding & Waters, 2021).

As aforementioned, coding was completed using a Microsoft Excel file. I decided to use Excel because of my comfort and expertise in using the software. Through the application of filtering, data can be sorted and manipulated in multiple ways, which allowed me to review in detail numerous interviews at once. Additionally, I reviewed the spreadsheet in various ways by sorting data by multiple data points, including initial or focused codes. This allowed me to
review participant responses to particular interview questions and all participant responses to individual questions at one time.

Once the Excel spreadsheet was set up as described in the transcription section, several columns were created to ensure that data were organized and accessible. The first columns identified the corresponding line of transcribed text for each participant’s interview, which served as a means of numbering each line of text that would be coded. Next, a column for each participant’s preassigned pseudonym will be used to match the transcription text with each interviewee. A bank of pseudonyms was also stored on the same protected cloud-based drive, which was only accessed by the researcher. The following column identified the interview question that the line of code addressed. This allowed for uniformity among all interview questions across all participants within the Excel file. When the interview questions were modified due to applying theoretical sensitivity, I included a denotation in the file to account for the deviation. The next column included the actual line of interview text. The subsequent four columns included the initial code, focused code, category, and theme indicative of the line of code within the same column. A separate tab within the Excel file housed a bank of all initial codes, focused codes, categories, and themes.

In the following sections, constructivist grounded theory coding methods, as utilized in this study, are defined in detail. Specific practices employed within each level of this study's data analysis process are also provided. A sample of the coding progression from transcription through theoretical coding is included (see Appendix F).

Initial Coding

Synonymous with open coding, initial coding is the first step in completing a grounded theory analysis (Birks & Mills, 2015). Initial coding allows a researcher to identify essential
words/groups of words. Glaser and Strauss (1967) referred to the initial coding process as assisting in establishing initial patterns, and once multiple patterns are extrapolated from the data, comparisons between codes can begin (Birks & Mills, 2015). Early coding requires a substantial amount of reflexivity early on in the process, with researchers constantly participating in self-interrogation about decisions made regarding data. This level of reflexivity allows a researcher to take ownership of the nuances of their data (Saldaña, 2013) and enables the identification of influences driving the direction of the study. To begin initial coding, a researcher, through a line-by-line or sort segment review, reviews a transcript. This study utilized the line-by-line approach.

In grounded theory coding, the researcher is expected to act on data, which allows the reliving and re-viewing of interactions (Charmaz, 2014). The process of initial coding requires a deep analysis of the data, with the researcher questioning minute details of the interview transcript and their relevance to the developing grounded theory (Birks & Mills, 2015). This questioning process accompanying initial coding is a long-held tradition of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser, 1978). Researchers begin to decipher if there are elements of process or action in the data that will influence future theoretical sampling, identifying who potential critical stakeholders of the field may be and whether they need to be contacted for additional data (Birks & Mills, 2015).

Charmaz (2014) recommended that researchers remain open throughout the initial coding process, stay close, and follow the direction of the data. This study utilized line-by-line coding during the initial coding phase, creating an initial code for each transcribed data line. Careful initial coding was critical in establishing fit and relevance within grounded theory analysis. Attention was paid to how codes clarified fundamental processes, illuminated assumptions, and
drew new insights from participant responses. All initial codes identified within this study adhered to the standards of in vivo coding and consisted only of words and phrases extrapolated from participant’s responses. Initial coding was completed for all 16 participants, and 3,223 unique codes were generated. After identifying initial codes, I moved to the following data analysis phase, focused coding, where categories were analyzed more deeply.

**Focused Coding**

Also known as ‘intermediate coding,’ focused coding is the process of generating codes that center on an identified core variable (Glaser, 1978). Charmaz (2014) identified this next step in coding as the point where existing significant codes begin to direct analysis. Strauss and Corbin (2014) referenced intermediate coding as ‘axial coding,’ emphasizing the nature of putting the once fractured data ‘back together’ and making new connections between and within categories that assist in elevating conceptual analysis levels. Focused coding is when the excess of initial coding is temporarily trimmed, although never entirely removed if additional analysis is needed later (Charmaz, 2014). In summation, pattern identification and relationships within the data inevitably lead to category development in what is expected to be a seamless analysis process.

Moving from initial to focused coding is sometimes linear (Charmaz, 2014). Through the iterative progression of conducting a grounded theory study, a participant’s response may resonate with a previously explored concept introduced by an earlier contributor. Such an occurrence necessitates further analysis and exploration of previous codes that may have been once overlooked. Charmaz (2014) identified this process as one of the strengths of grounded theory coding, where interacting and acting upon data supersedes passive review – the dynamic relationship between the researcher and the process allows for developing emerging ideas and
categories. In this study, each interview transcript was analyzed using focused coding following the initial coding process. As previously mentioned, focused codes were inputted in the Excel spreadsheet next to their corresponding initial codes. All efforts were made to ensure opportunities for in vivo coding to act as focused codes. There were 411 focused codes identified in this study. Within this set, 11 were pulled directly from the bank of initial codes, emphasizing the prevalence of similarities across participant responses.

**Categories and Theoretical Sampling**

Once all focused codes were actualized, data analysis moved to the phase of category generation. Categories and subcategories in a grounded theory study are rich in properties that assist in data analysis and abstraction (Birks & Mills, 2015). Defined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) as “characteristics of a category, the delineation of which defines [the category] and gives it meaning” (p. 101), a property helps develop conceptual depth and breadth. When identifying the properties of a code, researchers consider the terms of their study’s dimensions (Birks & Mills, 2015). Specifically, they consider the range of variance demonstrated and the conditions under which they operate. Like all other data in grounded theory studies, categories and subcategories are constantly compared while researchers move from low-level to medium-level concepts.

A core category encapsulates and explains the emerging grounded theory (Birks & Mills, 2015). The core category is the central phenomenon; all other categories center around and integrate. Selecting a core category occurs when a researcher can trace connections between frequently occurring details amongst all other categories and subcategories, including their properties and dimensions. Glaser (2007) affirmed the following generalizable elements of a core category. First, they demonstrate a certain degree of “grab” emphasizing “high impact variables
of great importance” (Glaser, 2007, p. 14). Secondly, Glaser asserted that core categories are hard to resist, with an effective core category “happening automatically with ease” (2007, p. 14).

A core category can reflect a fundamental social process, but Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Charmaz (2014) underscored the flexible nature of a core category.

The value of the final theory produced is contingent upon how data are collected, generated, and managed. In a grounded theory study, data are refined and analyzed through theoretical sampling, the essential method that reifies the emergent nature of the methodology (Birks & Mills, 2015). According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), theoretical sampling is the process of “data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes [their] data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop [their] theory as it emerges” (p. 45). Mills and Birks (2015) added to this definition by including identifying and pursuing clues from data analysis as a staple of the theoretical sampling definition.

Grounded theorists have varied recommendations regarding the timing of applying theoretical sampling. Charmaz (2014) indicated that theoretical sampling’s value occurs only after categories have been developed for adequate confirmation and clarification, allowing the researcher to go beyond the original data to understand what is happening with it. However, Mills and Birks (2015) recommended theoretical sampling as soon as possible. In this study, I utilized theoretical sampling after each interview. After analyzing and coding each transcript, I returned to the literature to develop a deeper understanding of newly introduced concepts shared by participants. I also identified areas where modification of the interview questions was necessary to allow future participants to address and expand upon newly emerged perspectives.
Upon selecting a core category, a researcher must begin delimiting theoretical sampling (Birks & Mills, 2015). Further generation or collection of data is only accepted if theoretical saturation of the core category and any related categories and sub-categories is possible. Thirty-two unique categories were identified in this study. Upon completion of the 16th interview, it became evident that all data could be sorted into one of the 32 categories, signaling theoretical saturation was completed, which indicated the opportunity to progress toward the next and final step of data analysis.

*Theoretical Sensitivity*

Unlike other forms of qualitative research, grounded theory emphasizes continuous comparison between data collection and data analysis, requiring researchers to remain sensitive to the data (Thistoll et al., 2016). Birks and Mills (2015) postulated that through a process referred to as theoretical sensitivity, researchers recognize and extract elements of relevance for their emerging theory from the data. Theoretical sensitivity specifically increases potential theoretical constructs found in the data. This profoundly personal practice encourages reflection into the researcher’s insight and intellectual history, emphasizing that they are the sum of all they have experienced. There are three crucial characteristics of theoretical sensitivity. First, it reflects the sum of the researcher’s personal, professional, and experiential history. The second characteristic is that various techniques, tools, or strategies can enhance theoretical sensitivity. Finally, theoretical sensitivity increases as research projects progress.

Theoretical sensitivity underscores that a researcher enters a grounded theory study with a certain level of previous knowledge and as a possible expert in their study area (Charmaz, 2014). Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasized that researchers approach a project as something other than tableau rasa (a blank slate). Instead, they posited that researchers’ perspectives assist
in identifying relevant codes and categories from generated data. Theoretical sensitivity is the intersection of a priori experiential and theoretical knowledge (Birks & Mills, 2015). Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasized that it is important to use personal and professional experiences to understand better how the characteristics of a researcher’s “multiple selves” impact positionality when collecting and analyzing data. This approach potentially risks the application of existing theoretical frameworks to data either consciously or unconsciously. For this reason, grounded theorists share strategies and analytic tools to enhance theoretical sensitivity.

There are multiple opportunities for a researcher to enhance their theoretical sensitivity. A controversial method, the completion of a systematic literature review, is met with numerous conflicting opinions by grounded theorists. Glaser (1998) recommended avoiding this literature consumption in the project's research area and instead ‘vociferously’ reviewing other studies that utilize a grounded theory methodology. Alternatively, Corbin and Strauss (1990) recommended a literature review as the literature itself may become a data source if theoretical relevance is extrapolated upon review. In this study, the conversation with the literature increased my theoretical sampling as I discovered new dimensions to the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities that encouraged deeper inquiry. Additionally, Strauss and Corbin (1990) identified several tools a grounded theorist could utilize to enrich their theoretical sensitivity, including questioning, drawing upon personal experience, and actively acknowledging biases, assumptions, and beliefs that may ‘unduly influence’ data analysis.

When faced with data that involves absolutist terms (‘always,’ ‘never,’ ‘it could not possibly be that way,’ etc.), Birks and Mills (2015) encouraged grounded theorists to investigate further to determine the root cause of these responses. In this study, these cues encouraged additional external questioning and internal action, including memoing to explicate assumptions.
and possible theoretical leanings. Emotions expressed through absolutist terms were used to define analytic breakthroughs in developing the abstract conceptual theory of this study. Additionally, I acknowledged participant responses utilizing absolutist terms by probing for additional clarification. When participants could not provide clear rationales for such responses, I reviewed the transcribed transcript to determine if additional responses supported a deeper understanding.

To summarize, grounded theory is a process that privileges the learning experience in both the researcher and their area of study. In this study, I actively developed this process and challenged myself to find meaning, relevance, and consequence while developing the final theory. Another tool utilized in comparative analysis in this study was memo writing.

**Memo Writing**

Memos are written records of thoughts, feelings, insights, and ideas and how they relate to a research project (Birks & Mills, 2015). Charmaz (2014) considered memos to be one of the most significant factors in establishing quality in a grounded theory study, identifying the process as “the pivotal intermediate step between data collection and writing drafts” (p. 162). Grounded theory studies (Thistoll et al., 2016; Wee & Paterson, 2009) in which postsecondary students represented the primary participant pool indicated memo writing as being fundamental to the development of any study utilizing grounded theory.

Stern (2007) equated memos to the mortar that holds together the building blocks of grounded theory. Mills and Birks (2015) referred to memos as the lubricant of the grounded theory machine. Through memoing, planned activities, unforeseen circumstances, deviations in direction, and any rationale for these decisions are recorded. Memoing is an uninhibited activity,
allowing the researcher to freely explore the relationship between their ideas, instincts, and intuition without committing to change the study’s direction.

Given the purpose of memo writing, Birks and Mills (2015) recommended the following topics be elaborated upon throughout a grounded theory study: (a) feelings and assumptions a researcher has regarding their research, along with their philosophical position as it relates to their growing work; and (b) musings on the literature reviewed and reflections on the research process, including potential issues, problems, and concerns. It is helpful to include in memo writing to gain a deeper understanding of the progress being made. Memos can consist of more than written explanations, as illustrations and diagrams can help a researcher view their project through another lens. It is also beneficial to write memos about previous memos as the researcher’s level of abstraction rises (Lempert, 2007).

Mills and Birks (2015) and Charmaz (2014) recommended that memo writing begin as early as the conceptualization of a research project. However, regularly scheduled memo writing opportunities are recommended due to what Glaser (1978) called the ‘primal rule,’ sporadic chances to memo during a grounded study research project should be prioritized. With an understanding of what and when to memo, a researcher’s next goal is to understand how to incorporate flexibility and freedom into the process. Grounded theorists share an unofficial rule for memo writing: it must be done through an approach beneficial to the individual researcher (Mills & Birks, 2015). Charmaz (2014) encouraged free writing, advocating against the concern of conventional forms in favor of free writing. Mills and Birks (2015) recommended a categorization system based on content, purpose, and timing and urged that this system be developed early on so that all memos adhere to it. Memos should remain open throughout the
entirety of a research project. Like memo writing, theoretical sensitivity must be practiced consistently through a research project to improve the quality of the study.

In this study, I completed memo writing before and after conducting each interview, which resulted in 32 unique memos that focused specifically on each participant. Memos were maintained in a series of Microsoft One Note files, and all hand-written notes captured at a time without access to the app were transcribed into the program later. Also, true to the spirit of this practice, I engaged in the process when ideas or thoughts in between interviews inspired me. An example of drafting a non-participant memo occurred after the third interview when all participants indicated the importance of restroom proximity to the one stop. This prompted the opportunity to reflect on additional instances where restroom facility locations could impact the co-curricular experience of postsecondary students with disabilities. It also generated probing questions for future participants to investigate their importance.

I also wrote memos before each interview. The intent behind each pre-interview memoing session was to spend time reflecting on the cumulative progress of the study. I used this scheduled write-up ritual to foster a relationship between the developing sensitizing topics and any additional literature I consumed on my path toward abstraction. Post-interview memoing, in contrast, helped dissect the individual interview that took place. As all interviews were recorded, memoing allowed an opportunity to review notes taken during each conversation. Additionally, memos were reviewed and referenced during the coding process to ensure clarity and understanding of participant responses.

**Member Checking**

A final copy of the completed transcript was distributed to each participant for approval of the interview transcript. Participants were asked to provide an affirmative response that they
approved the transcript or a list of corrections needed to ensure their voice was correctly captured in the data. Upon receipt of these responses, data analysis persisted. Additionally, research findings were shared with all participants after this study. Beyond those directly involved, I will share the results of this study with professional organizations through future journal articles and research conference presentations, particularly within the regional association from which the sites were selected.

**Quality in Grounded Theory**

According to Birks and Mills (2015), a critical component of establishing credibility is emphasizing quality, more commonly known as rigor. Applying rigor in a grounded theory study encourages the creative process. The researcher remains in control of all processes employed to accommodate or explain factors impacting the value of the study. Furthermore, the researcher’s ability to use measures that ensure quality directly affects the credibility of the study's outcome.

Evidence of rigor in qualitative research methodologies requires articulating sound design elements to establish trustworthiness and credibility (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In a constructivist grounded theory study, this is achieved by assessing whether (a) the theory demonstrates originality, (b) the theory has resonance, and (c) the evidence is useful. Although applying conventional grounded theory methods and a philosophical and methodological alignment are initial steps, additional measures require the researcher’s attention. This study used the following procedures to ensure the rigor and usefulness of data: memoing, triangulation, and member checking.

Given the nature of data collection and generation methods in grounded theory, a researcher should take ownership of the reality that it is difficult to know the direction the study will take after each participant (Birks & Mills, 2015). Charmaz (2014) underscored that
researchers must maintain memos that include an audit trail, manage data and resources, and demonstrate procedural logic to ensure procedural precision in a grounded theory study. All decisions made throughout the entire process of a grounded theory study, from inception to final theory generation, should be recorded. Consistent contributions to an audit trail ensure that if a researcher needs to backtrack and review previous records, they can do so easily. Audit trails also establish observable changes in research decisions and any recorded rationales for choices made by the researcher throughout the process. Cutcliffe and McKenna (2004) argued against the ability of audit trails to strengthen credibility; however, Birks and Mills (2015) stressed its utility in emphasizing transparency and increasing researcher accountability.

As previously stated, memo writing is an element of procedural precision that aids in the reflexivity and analytical processes needed for a constructivist grounded theory inquiry (Charmaz, 2014). Through the creation of an audit trail, as a researcher, I reviewed and illuminated the future theoretical direction through easy access to past musings and decisions (Mills & Birks, 2014). These records included decisions and rationales utilized throughout the study, with a deep understanding supporting directional changes as entirely conceived plans (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Memos were organized chronologically through Microsoft OneNote and stored on a drive that required authentication for access to decrease the likelihood of a data breach.

Triangulation was conducted by comparing multiple data sources to gain confidence in the quality of the collected and analyzed data (Mills & Birks, 2014). Marshall and Rossman (2016) emphasized that the quality of qualitative research data is increased when more than one perspective is incorporated into category generation. As a hallmark of constructivist grounded
theory, returning to the literature upon analysis of theoretical categories confirmed accuracy. Evidence of this theoretical analysis will be seen in Chapter Five.

Finally, member checking allowed the researcher to correctly interpret the participant’s representations of their world directly with them (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This practice served as an opportunity for participants to confirm findings. As previously mentioned, research participants were contacted through their university-specific email addresses to review final interview transcripts. Member checking also reinforces that the study is centered on the co-construction of data, with participants being involved beyond initial interviews. Participants were not granted access to review researcher memos. For this study, I conducted member checking after transcribing each interview’s transcript and after developing my final theory to ensure it resonated with participants and their experiences.

**Summary**

This study investigated students' experiences, which are heavily represented in enrollment populations yet often absent from the literature across postsecondary institutions nationwide. By beginning with a small sample of students who attend one of three four-year public universities in California and utilizing a constructivist grounded theory approach, this research project explored how one stops function from the perspective of students with disabilities. The findings from this study were drawn from a culmination of unique experiences and provided support toward recommendations for future implementation, as described in the following two chapters.
Chapter 4: Findings

Through a constructivist grounded theory analysis, six themes emerged from the data. This study explored the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities utilizing one stops and the ways in which these departments impacted their ability to navigate co-curricular services. In addition to their understanding of receiving support from one stop professionals, participants were also asked to describe how they experienced the physical structure and location of their one stops.

The study revealed that postsecondary students with disabilities are receiving support at their institution’s one stop but are not fully aware of its purpose, impact, and organizational structure. Participant responses emphasized that one stops are contributing to assisting students with postsecondary students with enrollment service needs. However, the extent and manner in which this population is supported suggested insufficient support. Participants acknowledged shortcomings and strengths when interacting with one stops, including generalists and specialists within both physical and virtual settings. When asked about their experiences, they shared that their support service needs exceeded the support they received at their institution’s established one stop. Participants identified the need to seek the support of non-one stop departments, which suggested a modified model of centralized services that best fit their individual needs. These unique, deeply personal depictions appeared to impact participants’ abilities to understand and take full advantage of the services offered by their institution's one stop.

The themes are presented in four major sections. The first section begins by exploring participants as social beings. This addressed how participants expressed their awareness of relationships and how they felt supported by various groups of individuals. This section addressed the first theme, origins and influences of support systems. Next, participant
understanding of one stop services is explored, emphasizing the second identified theme, perception of enrollment service support, and a third theme, conceptualization and preference of one stop service delivery. The third section explores the misunderstandings participants expressed regarding the structure and function of their one stops. This section ties in the fourth theme, the fundamental misunderstanding of one stops, and the fifth theme, expectations of one stop service providers, highlighting how participants were not fully aware of established processes and responsibilities. The fourth section discusses the sixth and final theme, identification of opportunities for one stop structural and location improvements. The Chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

**Origins and Influences of Support Systems**

This study focused on how students with disabilities experienced their university’s one stop, including how they believed these departments supported them with persisting through their academic programs and overall postsecondary retention. This study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the overall collegiate experience of participants. However, to better understand how participants perceived one stop support, it was critical to learn more about how these students generally viewed support. An understanding of how the participants defined support provided a baseline about their one stop experiences and how they related to their ability to persist.

Students spoke about how their fellow students, university faculty, and university staff were people who primarily supported them. These different types of support are discussed in the following sections. It is important to note that participants also referred to the support they received from their family and non-student friends, which in most cases were tied to examples of becoming acclimated to their disability identities and receiving adequate support before starting
their postsecondary programs. However, because these examples were not associated with how students understood support on their campuses, they were not included in this analysis.

**Student-to-Student Support**

Participants identified fellow students within one of two subgroups: peers who co-existed with them in curricular and co-curricular spaces and friends with whom they shared meaningful relationships. Participants reported feeling supported by their fellow students from both subgroups. In some instances, however, participants identified internal and external factors that prevented them from feeling supported by either subset.

Not all participants openly shared their disability identities with students, fearing stigmatization. Gerald and Jayne, for example, indicated they chose to withhold their disability identities from not only peers in curricular spaces but also fellow students with whom they formed meaningful relationships. In both interviews, these participants reported harboring insecurities and did not want to be perceived negatively as students. These perspectives were in the minority, as most participants acknowledged their openness with their disability identities when communicating with fellow students, elaborating upon how these relationships supported them.

One way participants described fellow students as supportive of them involved their acceptance from their peers. Barbie referenced the camaraderie shared amongst fellow students in their cohort:

There’s a…sense of solidarity with other students, and I trust several of them enough to let them know things that are happening. And we all sort of hide from the scary things together. And so, it doesn't fix our problems, but it does make trudging through them not completely hopeless.
Kitsune echoed similar sentiments about his experience receiving support from his peers, identifying the need to understand mutual needs among fellow students. When asked how he experienced peer support, he provided an example of working through in-class assignments and sharing, “It’s kind of like a give and take. We all support each other so that we can understand and create an optimal solution that is understandable to everyone.” He further shared that this support extends beyond curricular spaces. Outside the classroom, he identified students as the first point of contact when seeking assistance with co-curricular needs. Kitsune shared that a resident hall companion first connected him to the one stop. Participants addressed the positive benefits of establishing relationships with students, connecting their acceptance with their ability to navigate curricular and co-curricular channels.

In a few instances, participants shared that they did not feel connected to their peers, which they described as creating a disconnect between them and their institutions. Due to the age gap, Sasha, a nontraditional student who began her studies at 30, described themselves as unable to connect with their peers in co-curricular spaces. Sasha stated:

I've actually had a little bit of a hard time with that because I'm an older student, and a lot of students here, pretty commonly they’re in their early twenties, or sometimes they're not even 20. I think in that regard that is the one group where I do feel a little less supported only because I have a hard time connecting with some of the students at that age.

Conversely, Sasha described feeling supported by peers in curricular spaces, observing that they perceive students as sharing a mutual goal in those spaces. Specifically, she shared, “I feel pretty good in group work just because it's like we're all focusing on the same thing. If it came to other things, like maybe more personal stuff, I would feel a disconnect there.”
Participants with visible disabilities, such as Jake and May Jones, indicated that they felt responsible for educating others on their impairments. Doing so allowed them to clarify the need for additional support. Other participants identified how educating others about the needs of students with disabilities helped support fellow postsecondary students with disabilities. Maria elaborated that their relationships with fellow students are built not only on shared disability identities but also through a sense of community they have cultivated together to improve the experiences of fellow postsecondary students with disabilities. In this regard, relationships were maintained to increase the opportunities for fellow postsecondary students with disabilities to receive support in co-curricular spaces. Maria stated:

It's a lot easier to talk to people when they kind of already know what I’m like, and there's kind of a connection already made for me to go forward and talk to them about it openly. And a lot of times my classmates help me if I have any questions about anything or any support needed, they're always willing to explain it to me or create safe space. I can text them if I don't want to talk to them, be like, “Oh, I have a question about this really quick, can you answer it for me”? And they'll get back in minutes for me and that's always been really helpful not having to interact.

Participants with visible disabilities, such as Jake and May Jones, shared that they felt responsible for educating others on their impairments. Doing so allowed them to clarify the need for additional support. Other participants identified how educating others about the needs of students with disabilities helped support fellow postsecondary students with disabilities. Maria elaborated that their relationships with fellow students are built not only on shared disability identities, but also through a sense of community they’ve cultivated together to improve the experiences of fellow postsecondary students with disabilities. In this regard, relationships were
maintained to increase the opportunities for fellow postsecondary students with disabilities to receive support in co-curricular spaces. Maria shared:

I feel within my own social group of the folks that I hang out with the most, within my program, or talk to the most, the majority of them are also enrolled with the University Disability Resource Center. They definitely understand accommodations, the different struggles, and we're pretty open about the different accommodations and disabilities we have registered. In that realm I feel really supported because I feel no one told them about the University Disability Resource Center, and because they shared their struggles with me, and then I told them I was getting accommodations and priority registration and how helpful it had been, they were actually able to get services with them and get connected. That was pretty great to have us connected with them. So yeah, I would say overall pretty good support from my peers.

Participants readily disclosed how they utilized student-to-student support systems in curricular and co-curricular settings. The next group identified as serving a critical role in supporting postsecondary students with disabilities was the faculty. Participant responses regarding their interpretation of supportive faculty varied widely and are addressed in the following section.

**Faculty-to-Student Support**

Participants provided mixed responses when addressing their experiences with receiving support from their professors and other university faculty. In some instances, postsecondary students with disabilities highly regarded the support provided by faculty members who were seen as setting humanizing expectations in classroom settings and handling their individual needs with respect and discretion. In other instances, participants reported past negative interactions
with faculty and addressed their concerns with finding comfort in curricular spaces. Gerald, for example, identified his lack of support from faculty as occurring because his disability identity was not appropriately accommodated. When asked to speak about his experience with faculty, he described it as mainly “negative. Because to be honest, I think faculty doesn't really know the disability I have.”

Participants felt supported by faculty when their needs were met either directly or indirectly. In some instances, positive faculty experiences were tied directly to the ability of students to seamlessly utilize university-approved (and, in some cases, unofficial) accommodations. Jayne spoke highly of the support she received from faculty, referencing how they address her learning disability, “… my teachers are very, very polite when they find out that I have a learning disability. They go out of their way to make sure that I’m understanding without calling me out on it.” Maria shared their positive experience with a faculty member who incorporated the universal design of learning principles into the classroom. In this example, accommodations were not necessary because Maria could receive their support through established policies built into the course syllabus, which left Maria feeling supported by the professor. When asked to elaborate, they described their experience with faculty as being:

very positive.... I didn't even have to request accommodations with him because he was already providing extensions for students. He was very understanding in general.... It was a little bit accessible for me because it was more flexibility on how we could do research and still get credit for it in our class and still learn.

May Jones also addressed a similar positive experience of faculty support, referencing their appreciation of an environment where learning spaces were decolonized [note: in this context, decolonization was used colloquially, not academically]. They further elaborated that in
this context, decolonizing a learning space involved stripping certain expectations of students that had become synonymous with postsecondary education. One example they provided was replacing single standardized assignment due dates with flexible submission dates. They remarked that this experience had improved their overall sense of support from faculty across other courses:

[one professor] has this new conduct where he's decolonizing the classroom and he's making it a safe space for everyone to work in and having constructive workshops for us that are fully led by the process of decolonizing the classroom and understanding opinions and what's respectful and stuff like that. I've understood it a lot more…because of his teachings and the way they're teaching and that's been translated throughout my other classes too.

One complex finding within this data set was acknowledging an overall negative faculty experience despite being provided with appropriate accommodations. In these few instances, participants shared that their negative experiences with faculty did not negate feeling supported as students with disabilities. Celina commented that her professors honored her accommodations throughout her undergraduate enrollment, but she and her peers had negative perceptions of the faculty. Although she readily provided examples of direct experiences of her dissatisfaction with her professors, she further indicated that friends and classmates who had similar experiences validated her feelings. Celina elaborated:

I feel like the professors need a little work because I've heard so many bad. I've experienced…bad professors and my other friends experienced worse professors. That's just one thing I wish that the University would take into consideration when students complain a lot. That they do something about it rather than just let it go.
She later confirmed in her interview that her faculty experience has been positive regarding accommodations, identifying her professors as “very accommodating…. whenever I tell [them] that I have these accommodations, they’re super nice about it. I haven’t met a professor that has been rude about it.” These conflicting sentiments were not unique to Celina. Dev described her experience with the faculty overall as being negative but also described the faculty as “very accommodating” to her needs as a student who identifies as deaf/hard of hearing. With an understanding of how participants perceived support from fellow students and faculty, this Chapter explores the third identified group: staff.

**Staff-to-Student Support**

In the following section, the ways in which participants understood the ability of non-one stop university staff to support them as students was explored. A lack of emphasis on behalf of students towards their interactions with university staff emerged throughout the study. However, some participants provided examples of the support experiences they had with non-one stop staff.

Findings suggested that some participants (Chara, Gerald, Kitsune, and Liam) lacked information regarding support from staff as they did not have sufficient experiences with staff to comment. When asked about her concerns about receiving support from staff, Bri responded with, “no, no, I have not had any issues,” providing no further information. In some instances, participants did recall significant experiences with staff, mostly within their institution’s disability resource center. However, participants addressed various departments outside of the one stop and disability resource center that catered directly to special populations of students, such as veteran students, low-income students, or queer students, as providing support. They did recall some interactions but did not provide enough information to clearly articulate how this
additional support differed from the one stop and the disability resource center. Additionally, participants identified a lack of support in obtaining services that departments claimed to provide. Barbie did not feel supported by university staff and attributed a lack of accountability across the board to overlooking errors made to student accounts. They reiterated:

Asking anyone, “well, who can I ask?” is very often met with, “I don't know.” I've never seen a lack of knowledge save people from so much accountability or penalty because it certainly doesn't work that way for the students. If we don't get something worked out, then we're kind of carrying the weight of everything that goes wrong. So that has been a really big issue.

Denise, a doctoral student, had a similar perspective on her expectation of staff support. She elaborated upon the negative feelings she harbored from her experiences, and when asked if she felt that the staff at Littleroot University supported her, she responded:

No, I actually feel the opposite. I feel like everyone's just kind of washing their hands off… I try to reach for help, but I just feel like I'm being met with coldness…indifference almost. “We don't have time to really help you,” and almost like they don't believe me or think badly of me. I'm not sure. That's just what I'm feeling.

With an established understanding of the many ways in which participants experienced support from various campus community members, this Chapter continues with an exploration of participants’ knowledge of one stop services. The next section begins with a review of findings addressing participants’ perceptions of enrollment service support and their conceptualization and preferences of one-stop service delivery. These themes assist in the continued development of a holistic understanding of the one stop experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities.
Knowledge of Enrollment Services

Whether participants expressed positive or negative feelings towards their institution’s one stop, they understood that because one stops are recognized as university departments, there are objective services provided to students, including support for admissions, financial aid, registration, and student business service-related services. The following section explores the knowledge base regarding enrollment services among participants in this study. Understanding what services are delivered by one stop support staff established a fundamental knowledge base of how to navigate said services best. This was clear for some participants who demonstrated a clear understanding of the functions of the one stop through their responses. For others, however, it was less clear. In these instances, participant responses did not accurately describe the services offered at their institution’s one stop.

The following section provides examples of how participants understood enrollment services. In some instances, an awareness of enrollment services was deeply rooted in a specific instance, and when necessary, responses addressed specific customer service experiences tied to their one stop. In a future section, customer service will be reviewed holistically. Services from the following departments were identified in this study as components of the one stop: admissions, billing and business services, financial aid, and the registrar’s office.

Participant Knowledge of One Stops

Participants provided varying responses that indicated their general understanding of their institution’s one stop. It was critical to establish a baseline understanding of the knowledge these participants maintained to understand their experiences better. Therefore, participants were asked to define the purpose of a one stop in their terms. They were also asked to identify specific experiences and to highlight individuals at the one stop who stood out, either negatively or
positively. Participant responses varied greatly. In some instances, it was evident that these postsecondary students with disabilities demonstrated a deep understanding of their institution’s one stop and its role in their co-curricular success. In other instances, participants seemed unaware of the services offered.

May Jones, who recounted visiting the one stop upwards of two to three times a week when they first arrived at their university, shared their understanding of what a one stop is by emphasizing its centralized services and ability to provide students with multiple layers of support:

For me, the one stop is there for literally anything you need, any general questions, any kind of information that isn’t presented online or isn’t clarified online, that’s what it’s there for. It’s there to help you with any necessities or basic needs or connecting you to resources. It’s just kind of there to be a powerhouse that sends outlets to other small places.

May Jones accurately identified that the one stop acts as a conduit for the university. Although the one stop is designated to provide services for a limited number of departments, one stops by their very nature may become, as May Jones went on to state, “clarifying station[s] used for direction.”

The way students understood the one stop seemingly impacted how they preferred to receive support. In some cases, participant understanding of the one stop was in line with the structure and organization as reported by the University. More often, however, this was not the case, and these misunderstandings will be addressed later. Students such as Liam described the purpose of the one stop as addressing “Everything. Like all-encompassing. Anything a student would need that that's related to the final product of sitting in a classroom. And then when it's
time to do things like, transition, for instance, graduation…assistance with that.” What follows is an exploration of participants’ knowledge of enrollment services, including admissions, financial aid, office of the Registrar, and student business services.

**Admissions**

Most participants had little to no recent working experience with their institution’s admissions office, as they had been matriculated for several years. Nevertheless, each participant was required to apply through their institution’s formal admissions process. As such, some understanding of the procedures that drive pre-matriculation requirements for all students was needed. Littleroot University and Fallarbor University one stops do not provide designated support for graduate-level admissions, as these institutions rely on separate focused departments to assist this specific population. Slateport University, however, which also has a designated graduate-level admissions unit, does offer support for graduate-level admissions at their one stop. Still, participants who reported being graduate students were asked to indicate their knowledge and experiences of the admissions process to establish a baseline understanding of enrollment management-related services.

Most participants who elaborated on their experience with the Admissions Office described the application process as fairly easy. Alexandra succinctly summarized her knowledge of admissions, saying she “simply” applied to her university by submitting an online application. Chara and Jayne reported that although their experiences with the process were straightforward, they did require support from the one stop department, including assistance with understanding how to obtain requested supplemental documentation and clarification of specific admissions application items.
Other participants, however, expressed concerns with the admissions process, specifically with the customer service support they received when reaching out to one stop staff for assistance with their application and supporting documentation. Liam disclosed that their negative experiences led them to struggle through the admissions process. When Liam was asked to describe how comfortable they felt reaching out to the admissions office for assistance, they responded, “I don't remember being able to rely on them much, so I would say no, and I had to just kind of figure it out and hope for the best.” Jake, who, before attending their current University, was enrolled at another four-year public university, one that they reported as having a similar admissions process, expressed that their experience applying was confusing:

I had a lot of questions and I just didn't know what I was doing. I just felt really lost the whole time and I actually got rejected from the University. They said, “oh you didn't submit grades for these classes” and those were the classes that I had just taken and submitted. I had called the one stop like multiple times to confirm that they had everything I needed and then I got rejected for something that was totally incorrect. I had to appeal, and then they let me in…and they still ended up saying that it was my fault for not submitting like an updated grade thing. That was annoying too because I was so lost and it was so new to the process. When I called and asked people, when I said, “oh, I submitted this” they just heard that and said, “okay, well, that's on the checklist, you're good,” whereas I thought they were looking at my file to see if things were submitted. That was the impression that I got and then learning that that wasn't the case the whole time, and it caused me to be rejected from the school was really scary. But you know, they did let me back in.
Jake was not the only participant to experience a processing issue related to supplemental admissions application documentation. A first-year student, Kitsune, recalled an error regarding his undergraduate admissions application and receipt of required supporting documentation. Kitsune reached out for support but reported he was ultimately dissatisfied with the experience because he did not receive the instant gratification he expected. Kitsune shared:

I ran into a couple issues when I was trying to submit my admission documents. An example of this was when I was trying to submit some different information, I forget which ones, but when I completed it, I sent it in and I came back to it a couple days later and it still said that “hey, you haven’t finished this yet,” or something along those lines. And then when I would try to open it up, it would say, “nope, sorry, you don't have to include it again. You're already finished.” So that was something that really confused me. I had to reach out to admissions to ask, “Hey, I've run into this problem, can you explain how I can resolve it?” And they said that it just takes a while to process.

As previously indicated, admissions inquiries can serve as the initial point of contact between a postsecondary student with disabilities and their one stop. Through the data collection process, it became evident that participants were more likely to have vivid recounts of experiences with the other departments represented with the one stop, including the office of the Registrar and student business services. The department referenced most often by postsecondary students with disabilities was financial aid. Participant responses demonstrated a wide spectrum understanding of financial aid elements. They indicated varying degrees of satisfaction with financial aid support received at the one stop. The following section addresses participants’ knowledge of financial aid concerning the one stop.
Financial Aid

When asked to describe their understanding of financial aid, participants addressed the impact of seeking, securing, and understanding the complex facets of federal financial aid. A sense of the importance of financial aid was evident across all participant interviews, with all but one participant seeking financial assistance through their institution’s one stop. Nevertheless, this participant shared their understanding that financial aid is a major concern for many postsecondary students with disabilities. Responses emphasized varying degrees of knowledge of foundational policies and procedures related to federal student aid.

Many participants referenced their inability to initially understand how to navigate financial aid, citing a learning curve that was eventually reached after multiple visits to the one stop and cycles of processing. Responses often addressed one of two financial aid-related elements as contributing toward a nascent misunderstanding. Financial aid offer letters, or documents provided to incoming and continuing students with a breakdown of the cost of living compared to their annual cost of attendance, were identified as difficult to understand and navigate. Additionally, students reported lacking a strong sense of financial literacy or the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about money-related actions. It became evident that the participants who struggled with either or both topics did not have a strong fundamental understanding of financial aid.

Alexandra reported that most of her visits to the Littleroot University one stop centered on financial aid. When asked what initially brought her to the one stop, she stated:

It was the financial aid package. I wasn't sure how that worked in the first place because I'm essentially a full ride. And at first, in the beginning, [the University] kept on saying I owe them money, but I knew that wasn't true because essentially the financial aid
package I get was supposed to cover everything outside of textbooks and all that. So, whenever I saw that I owed money, I was like, “no, I don't.”

Experiences like Alexandra’s were not unique, with other participants, such as Barbie and Denise, disclosing that they experienced issues with their funding that required additional review by financial aid professionals. Sasha shared that the disconnect between their understanding of how much financial aid they expected to receive and a notice of outstanding account balance forced her to visit the one stop to clarify what was occurring. Regarding a visit to the one stop Sasha stated, “had to do with FAFSA because I was awarded certain grants and then a week or so before school started, it said that I owed $2,000 and I was like, what? I thought I had paid everything off.”

Bri, another participant who experienced an error with her financial aid package, received support from the one stop over the phone and stated: “I had called them because I had a question about something on my financial aid that wasn't quite right. They were able to clarify it for me and then fix it so that way my financial aid was correct.” In this instance, participants such as Bri understood through a review of their financial aid package that an error had occurred and received a resolution at the one stop.

A concern with the timing of financial aid was communicated by participants, who addressed their experiences of receiving these services as being negative. Being able to receive financial aid funds promptly before starting an academic term emerged as an expectation across postsecondary students with disabilities. Instances where this was not the case resulted in additional contact between participants and the one stop. May Jones said they had to physically return to the one stop multiple times to follow up with concerns on their aid. Specially, May Jones shared thoughts regarding the delay and the visits:
Yeah, a lot of the times with that, it was just more of waiting for my financial aid to kick in because it came in too late and there was a bit of a lag. So those have been quite scary. But with that, I would always just go to the one stop again and ask them about it and they would explain it to me in a different way or a way I could understand it.

In some instances, participants emphasized that their financial aid, scholarships, and grants were directly connected to elements of their lived experiences, including veteran student status and disability identity. Not all participants provided explicit details regarding the source of their funding. Instances where funding was contingent upon prior active-duty service arose, such as Liam’s reliance on the financing from their GI Bill or were directly impacted by the diagnosis of a medical condition, such as Jake, who experienced an increase in their PELL Grant eligibility immediately following their diagnosis of Ehlers-Danlos syndrome. In both examples, the introduction of a non-one stop department influencing the services provided by a one stop began to blur the lines of how these students continued to experience the one stop. This relationship will be addressed in a later section.

The following section continues with a review of the participants understandings of services provided on behalf of the Office of the Registrar. Centralized enrollment services seek to bridge together departments that often work in concert throughout a student’s enrollment at an institution. For example, the relationship between the Office of the Registrar and the Financial Aid Office provides support that seamlessly ensures that students are registered and funded appropriately.

**Registrar Services**

When participants commented on the Office of the Registrar, their replies demonstrated an understanding of its transactional environment. These responses emphasized participant
experiences through examples of completing task-like requests throughout the academic year. Unlike both the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, responses centering on the Office of the Registrar noted that most experiences were predicated upon submitting documentation for review and processing and annual course registration. In this way, experiences differed in that interactions with one stop employees were limited, as shared by May Jones and Dev, for example. Their responses identified the first instances of one of the departments represented by the one stop not utilized by participants. A lack of experience with the Office of the Registrar did not indicate that these participants had not utilized Registrar-related services. Rather, it emphasized that, in some ways, self-service options created and maintained by enrollment management professionals negated the need for interactions.

One of the primary roles that the Office of the Registrar serves is the maintenance and custody of student records, files that include a student’s academic transcript. The contents of these records vary and can range from the documentation initiating transfer credit hours to establishing in-state residency for tuition assessment purposes. Participants described needing to communicate with the Office of the Registrar to submit official documentation in various capacities. Gerald, for example, recalled his experience with the one stop and Registrar-related services focused on seeking transfer credit, that is, attempting to integrate previously earned academic credit from a local community college into his Littleroot University academic record. He commented:

The only time I used [registrar services at the one stop] was for transferring of [credits from prior community college] transcripts. That was it…it was a pretty good experience. [The one stop] sent it to [the Office of the Registrar] and they sent it to my counselor, and then I had overrides. That's it.
Additionally, interactions with the one stop regarding Registrar-related functions included student registration. Participants identified restrictions on their ability to register and concerns with registration-related technology and systems. To clarify, participants understood that course registration was a regular process requiring students to manually select and register for courses through institution-specific information self-service portals. However, in some interviews, participants indicated that registration required additional work beyond completing the process. Bri shared that they experienced a temporary restriction, or hold, preventing them from registering for a future class, which required contact with the one stop for additional information and guidance. Chara did not refer to any restrictions preventing them from registering, nor did they describe any concerns with understanding the registration process. Rather, they presented concerns with the interface of the registration self-service portal. Chara commented:

[Course registration] was a little hard just because of how it was formatted, I think, because I think it was just two screens side by side in one web page. So, it made it a little difficult to understand, like “okay, what button do I press to confirm my registration?” and such.

Conversely, Kitsune described the process of registration through the self-service portal as being intuitive, describing the process in their interview:

The experience is, I would say, fairly easy. There is a whole system where [the online registration interface] shows where it creates a little calendar for you at the bottom…with different time slots so you can see how your classes all fit together: the different times, the different tests…so you can ensure that you're not double enrolling yourself in classes and you can also check where [classes] are [physically located].
With an understanding of one stop services related to admissions, financial aid, and registrar services, the final section of participant knowledge focuses on student business services, a department dedicated to collecting tuition dollars.

**Student Business Services**

When asked to provide their understanding of student business services, including how student billing plays a role in the ability of postsecondary students with disabilities to remain enrolled at their universities, participants acknowledged mixed levels of comprehension. For some, student billing acted as an annual stressor, specifically for students who were not fully funded, requiring them to pay their tuition and fees out of pocket. For others, the reliance on federal financial aid and scholarships significantly reduced the total attendance cost, leaving a reasonable and, more importantly, affordable balance. External factors governing the annual cost of tuition of each institution, as well as financial aid eligibility, were subject to yearly fluctuations. Several participants reported their frustrations that billing in one year was completely different compared to other years.

Regardless of their interpretation of their annual student balance, participants widely understood the adverse enrollment consequences following failure to pay annual tuition and fees by the institution’s posted deadline. Participants overwhelmingly disclosed that they knew that students carrying a balance beyond the deadline would be administratively unenrolled from all courses for the term. Demi experienced this administrative drop for non-payment. Demi was the only participant interviewed who did not rely on financial aid or scholarships. She explained that oversight on her father’s end resulted in a soft reset of their curricular progress. Demi stated:
One time my dad forgot to pay for my classes and so they were dropped. I kept reminding him and he waited too long, and they dropped them. So, I had to hurry up and find more classes and then I had to go there and explain the situation. That was not fun.

Demi then explained that although the experience was unfavorable, her interaction with the one stop, specifically the student business office, was positive. She stated “they understood my situation and they sympathized with it…they're not the one that obviously made the rules to drop me. They were helpful.” This response emphasized Demi’s perception that one stop employees were not responsible for policy creation but rather enforcers of the institution’s rules and regulations. The idea that one stop employees are situated in powerless positions was developed over several interviews and will be further elaborated upon in a later section.

With an understanding of how postsecondary students with disabilities understand enrollment management services, the next section discusses how participants conceptualize service delivery support. This theme additionally addresses the rationale behind the preference for service delivery models, as reported by participants.

**Conceptualization and Preference of Support Service Delivery**

Participants, as postsecondary students with disabilities, possess the free range and autonomy to decide how to best seek support from their one stop. In this study, participants identified three channels of support service delivery: in-person, over the phone, and through email. Understanding which delivery method of support services best supports an individual student’s needs is critical, and participants identified the multiple factors that led them toward identifying their personal preferences. The following section includes the presentation of participant responses regarding how they reported receiving support from one stops and how they conceptualize when to utilize available options.
In-Person Support

Some participants felt in-person support best suited their needs, as their experiences utilizing alternative customer service methods were reported as inefficient. Alexandra shared that physically visiting Littleroot University was often laborious when experiencing flare-ups, although her preference always led her to in-person visits. She associated the ability to have a face-to-face conversation with the latitude to communicate concerns and discuss solutions easily. Alexandra indicated:

[The one stop] was great. It was much easier to talk to them in person than online. They were able to answer my questions pretty fast regarding the financial aid issues I was having. And then they were able to explain it better face to face. We did figure out what was going on, which made it much easier. And yeah, it was a much faster turnaround.

Celina shared that she preferred visiting the one stop in person because she felt “asking questions over the phone isn't really… it's nice, but it’s better to talk to people at the Fallarbor University one stop because they work a lot more efficiently to give you answers to your questions.”

The ability to seek in-person support is predicated on participants being physically on campus during the one stop’s office hours. This posed a need for participants to balance curricular and co-curricular needs throughout the day. Participants who carried full-time academic course loads during their interviews valued the ability to manage co-curricular expectations in a timely manner. The way participants defined time-management support varied. Some participants attributed their decision to seek in-person support to the wait time between arriving and receiving a response. Throughout his interview, Gerald drew a connection between timing his visit to the one stop and ensuring a quick, efficient trip. He shared that his preference is derived from in-person support being “so much easier and faster. So that's why after class, I
just go there, then just go home.” When asked to elaborate further, he explained that the best
time to seek support is in the middle of the day, as he believed services are not utilized as much
as when fellow students are in class.

Sasha, while preferring to receive support over the phone or through email,
acknowledged that in some instances, in-person support serves as the most appropriate means to
address urgent and sensitive issues when students are already on campus. In relaying her
experience, she acknowledged that her in-person visit was predicated on a prior phone
conversation, ultimately leading her back to make another phone call. She was unsure of how the
issue was resolved. Sasha revealed:

I had a hold on my account, and I had never seen something like that before, so I was
freaking out. And so, I went physically because I was already there on campus and I
asked the person, “what does this mean? I don't understand”. And they said, “oh, you
need to call this phone number.” And I remember telling them, “Well, I've already called
this phone number and they told me to come here to talk to someone in person, so that's
why I'm really confused now.” And then I think they just said to call a different phone
number, and I ended up doing that and I don't remember if that was what settled it or if I
ended up having to call another number after that, but it became kind of messy and I don't
even remember how I got a resolution for that.

Not all participants who favored in-person support were without concerns with this
specific service delivery method. Participants, including Alexandra, identified as having a
weakness in receptive language and expressed a fear of being perceived negatively due to their
inability to comprehend information gathered audibly. When asked to elaborate on their
experience, Alexandra stated, “Yeah, because I do better face-to-face, but I get embarrassed if I
have to be like, ‘can you repeat that? Can you repeat that? I couldn't understand what you just said.’” Unlike in-person support, which required students to balance their time while being physically on campus, phone support opened up opportunities to seek assistance regardless of where they physically were.

**Phone Support**

One of the two alternatives to physically visiting a one stop to receive support identified by participants throughout this study is calling in and speaking with a one stop representative over the phone. It was confirmed that all three institution’s one stops utilized student assistant and generalist staff coverage to answer the phone lines. This did not confirm the absence of specialist support over the phone, which was expected when advanced support was required. It did, however, provide insight into participant responses and how they link the quality of support with the type of employee assisting them. A participant’s confidence in the assistance received by multiple types of one stop employees is addressed in a later section.

Participants overwhelmingly shared concerns with reaching the one stop by phone and reported that they experienced unreasonably long wait times for calls to be answered. Similarly, participants identified the length of time for messages to be returned as equally long. The way participants addressed this phenomenon varied. Some students, such as Gerald, succinctly defined this concern by simply stating “when you call over the phone, it takes a while.” This curt sentiment emerged through multiple participant interviews. Others, including Jake, however, emphasized just how large of an impact phone support played on their ability to seek support. Jake shared:
There's been times where I have to leave a message because the phones aren't answered and leaving the message is always scary because I've been like, “are they actually going to get back to me?” I never know.

In addition, participants emphasized that after experiencing long wait times for calls to be answered, they were placed on hold multiple times once connected and felt as though responses were incomplete. This lack of confidence in the accuracy of information obtained often required additional phone calls where participants sought reassurance. Denise, who called the one stop to clarify an outstanding balance, emphasized she felt “lucky” she could reach someone they reported as a specialist. However, she indicated that this process required additional effort to get this individual on the phone. She stated:

Yes, I feel like I was lucky enough to have been able to talk to someone who was actually in charge of determining that stuff, but I had to do a lot of legwork in order to get her on the phone and explain to her my situation.

Not all responses regarding phone calls were negative. Celina shared that her preference for in-person support did not invalidate her ability to receive support over the phone; it simply was not a preference. Students who did not rely on in-person or phone services utilized a third method of communication to contact one stop professionals: email.

Email Support

The third alternative to obtaining one stop support is through email. In some instances, participants simply preferred utilizing email services when contacting their institution’s one stop. Other participants, however, perceived both in-person and telephone support as failing to meet their needs. Jayne, who reported that she is easily distracted when receiving in-person support, noted a benefit in fully comprehending and returning to information relayed when it is presented
in an email. Citing instances where they were unable to recall all the individual items discussed at the one stop when visiting, Jayne shared that “if [an answer is in] an email, I can just look back on the email and be like, ‘okay, this is the question I asked specifically, and this is the answer they gave me.’”

Other participants noted that email was the predominant means of communication between the University and students and developed expectations of its role in day-to-day operations. Kitsune remarked on his heavy reliance on utilizing email to remain apprised of campus updates, mentioning that he used the communication tool to seek support and clarification regarding his student account when he cannot physically visit the one stop. Celina indicated that one stop employees sometimes initiated their correspondence with students over email, responding accordingly by replying to the original email message or any following messages. She also indicated that beyond communication with students, established procedures required students to remain in constant email communication. Celina shared her disappointment with the department’s utilization of email regarding a particular incident and an appeal for additional financial aid consideration. Specifically, Celina commented:

I remember there was a lot of waiting, which is something that I didn't like. It was so stressful. The waiting process is so stressful. And ultimately, they declined my appeal. Which was disappointing. I don't know, I just didn't like how it took so much time just for them to say no. But I feel like with more sensitive situations, it's just, it was so stressful during that time. Whenever I would email them, they would email me back and say, ‘this is going to take a couple days to do.’ I hated the waiting game. I hated it so much. It was so stressful, especially when you're dealing with money and how you're going to pay for college. It's even more stressful as a student because how are you going to afford college?
I don't know, I just hated how they took so much time just to say no. They could have just said no then and there rather than get my hopes up.

Unlike in-person and phone support through the one stop, which are both intended to connect students with support staff in the moment, email introduced a delayed response time. Participants had conflicting perspectives on their one stop’s email response time. Some participants who were not in favor cited multiple factors that contributed to their lack of support for email correspondence, including having experienced a longer-than-expected wait time in receiving responses. Alexandra ultimately began seeking in-person support after multiple negative experiences with response times by one stop employees, specifically with inquiries centered on time-sensitive matters, such as their federal student aid. She shared:

It mostly felt like it took forever for them to respond back, which led me to going in person because I'm not going to wait two weeks. And they do describe that it may take a while for someone to respond back to that email.

Conversely, students such as Barbie described email responses as occurring “in a timely manner,” yet they expressed disapproval of the quality of a response through email support. Barbie summarized their lack of satisfaction with email by stating, “Even if the answers are insufficient, I at least know the answer they have is what it is within a couple of days.”

Ultimately, participants acknowledged that there were multiple means of contacting and receiving support from one stop team members. Through their own experiences, they developed a preference for how they experienced the one stop at their institution. Findings suggested that these preferences did not negate the ability of participants to utilize multiple methods of seeking support, as participants indicated. Participant responses expanded upon expecting a one stop to
be accessible through numerous means, and in some cases requiring more than one option to resolve an inquiry or seek appropriate assistance.

The following section describes how participants reported how they understood the purpose of the one stop, including their knowledge of enrollment management services and their awareness of the multiple ways they could experience their one stop to receive help. This section includes participant misunderstandings as they relate to the one stop.

**Misunderstandings of One Stop Fundamentals**

This study sought to gain insight into the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities and their utilization of one stop services. In all interviews, participants shared examples of how they experienced the physical space and the individual one-stop employees and how both related to their ability to receive co-curricular enrollment service support. An understanding of the one stop model as it pertains to the particular institution was necessary to situate responses. To achieve this, all three one stops were studied in depth, including their locations and proximity to additional campus services, organizational structure, and services offered.

With an established background on elements of the one stop, it became evident that student responses occasionally overlooked or included misconceptions of the operations of their one stop. Their understanding did not match the services provided by their one stop, as identified through the in-depth review of all three institutions. The following section addresses examples of what they misunderstood. Two main categories emerged within this particular data: incongruence related to the one stop experience and expectations of one stop service providers. These categories reflected experiences where participants spoke to their self-awareness when exploring their one stops as actual departments within their institution. These categories also
specifically addressed expectations of one stop employees as defined by their misunderstandings. The following section identifies fundamental misunderstandings, addressing elements participants reported incorrectly compared to the in-depth review results.

**Incongruence Within the One Stop Experience**

Throughout all interviews, it became evident that not all postsecondary students could readily identify the one stop at their institution through its official title or departmental designation as a one stop. To clarify, to partake in this study, participants were required to have received support from their institution’s one stop. After each interview, it was determined that each participant did have the requisite prior experience at their one stop. However, some participants did not initially understand interview questions that referenced a “one stop,” signifying a misunderstanding between the participant’s utilization of services and awareness of services utilized through the one stop. Alexandra initially shared that she struggled with recalling the purpose of the one stop and its location, “I’m actually not sure about the Littleroot University one stop…I know we change a lot of our building locations, so they're constantly changing. I actually don't know much about our one stop.” Once provided a summary of the services offered at Littleroot University’s one stop, Alexandra acknowledged that she received support from the one stop but did not refer to it as a one stop or by its official name.

Similarly, Bri was unsure whether she visited the one stop of Littleroot University until she understood that her visits to seek financial aid support were visits to the one stop. Like other participants, she misconstrued the university’s designated one stop for another department, one that although servicing students, does not function in a similar capacity where enrollment support is provided. She confided, “I'm really not sure I've visited; I know I visited…I thought it was the Littleroot University one stop.” Once she understood the relationship between financial aid
support and the one stop, she remarked that she had unknowingly referred to a separate, unrelated department as the Littleroot University one stop for several years. Barbie, who at the time of her interview had entered the seventh year of their doctoral program, shared their realization of what the one stop was during their interview when the department’s name was identified as the source for enrollment service support. Barbie acknowledged:

Yeah, I'd heard the words and I'd seen them on things before. I just understood that to mean something different than what it apparently is. I didn't realize it was a structured thing that has a purpose for doing stuff. I thought Littleroot University’s one stop was like, 'oh, here's some stuff that will give it a room and here's some pamphlets over here and self-serve to go…' I don't know. I did not realize there was any structure to, it really.

Beyond an inability to identify the one stop by name and location, participants disclosed they were more comfortable seeking support through other university departments, including those that were not designated as official enrollment management servicing locations. Sasha commented that they understood their financial aid questions could be answered and clarified at the one stop. However, once they established a relationship with their University’s TRIO Program, a department federally designated to assist postsecondary students from disadvantaged backgrounds, they began to seek support externally from a TRIO employee who worked closely with the financial aid office on their behalf to follow up with concerns that would have been more appropriately addressed at the one stop. Sasha stated:

[Sasha’s TRIO contact] had a friend at the financial aid office and they contacted them at least twice to help me get a resolution and relief to other financial aid issues. So, I feel like it was TRIO who has been more helpful in terms of things that are not neurodivergent or physical disability stuff.
It was not unusual for participants to refer to elements of the one stop as being absent from the established model. Throughout their interview, Liam indicated their lack of quality in the one stop’s ability to support them as a student, questioning their confidence in their correspondence with one stop employees. When asked to describe an alternative model that would better suit their needs, Liam ultimately produced a blueprint for a one stop model, describing her university’s one stop with minor modifications, specifically an assignment of a generalist to a specific group of students and a required increase in awareness of assisting students with disabilities. Liam stated:

There's a lot of benefit to physicality and to having all those offices where they may be more familiar with each other because they're close together. And so, it ends up building a stronger system for somebody with disabilities. Especially the ones you can't see. I would assign specific people to do multiple functions for the student and be cross trained. Then I would have a second tier of support who are not cross trained in general stuff but can dive down deeper into complicated issues because students with disabilities can often have complicated issues. So having, in other words, a front facing, first level of support where you have specific teams assigned to specific students like. Team A is for all students with A through F, team B is for G through M, or something. And it's a team of people, not a single point of failure. They are, how do you call it, cross trained in finance, in registration, and anything that needs to happen in disability services office options. That way, we can access one place and then when it gets too complicated where you need that extra level of support and detail, they would have the reach back support for the finance department. Somebody who is completely and fully trained in finance specifics, in business office specifics.
Liam also addressed the inclusion of additional departments beyond those currently supported by the University’s one stop, echoing Sasha’s reliance on an external department to improve the one stop experience. Liam was not the only student who addressed the lack of knowledge and training held by one stop employees on how to work with postsecondary students with disabilities. With an understanding of participants' incongruencies regarding one stops, the next section identifies the expectations of one stop service providers held by postsecondary students with disabilities.

**Expectations of One Stop Service Providers**

Throughout the study, participants described their experiences working directly with one stop employees, including generalists, specialists, and student workers. Support limitations emerged through the interviews. Participants discussed how their experiences with each type of employee defined their perception of those individuals to provide future support. Several examples of interactions being either positive or negative that were predicated on the individual’s title were mentioned. Additionally, participants addressed what they perceived to be the competency range between the three groups. Multiple participants considered specialists the most supportive individuals at the one stop and student workers the least. Participants reported mixed reviews on generalists; in some instances, they indicated their preference to be escalated to receive support directly from a specialist. In describing their interactions, participants' descriptions of the roles each employee type played at the one stop slightly deviated according to the institution they attended.

**Generalist and Specialist Model of Support**

It was not evident by all participants that both front-line generalists and specialists staffed the one stop at their institution. Those who understood described their institution’s one stop as
multiple individuals with varying levels of knowledge from separate departments working in collaboration to provide holistic support in one location. They further indicated that inquiries addressed by the one stop reflected the support of one or more of these individuals. Those who did not understand the staffing organization of the one stop could not speak to the centralization of this support. In practice, the one stop model positions generalists as the first point of contact and support. Generalists were tasked with redirecting inquiries to specialists if a more robust understanding of enrollment services beyond their expertise was needed.

Participants shared varying experiences with being escalated from a generalist to a specialist. These examples included both voluntary and involuntary requests for escalation. In some instances, participants described being escalated from a generalist to a specialist without making an explicit request. When this occurred, participants understood that additional expertise beyond the support provided by a generalist was needed. Gerald recalled always being assigned to a specialist to assist with his financial aid related inquiries. He posited that he had no working experience with generalists: “The thing is, I've never used a generalist. Always a specialist because they always appointed me to a specialist. They always knew which [to appoint me to a] financial aid specialist, billing specialist…”

Other participants developed a relationship with a particular specialist after being supported, preferring to receive support from them only. May Jones was an example of a postsecondary student with disabilities who identified an individual one stop employee as being helpful in one instance and wanting to return only to receive support from that single employee. Their positive experience was built using visual aids to emphasize the support provided. May Jones shared, “I only worked with one person, the one guy who helped me and my mom, who
actually showed me his computer and walked me through everything through his side and how it made sense. And I think more of that will do well.”

A desire to directly seek specialist support in place of the established process of working with a generalist emerged throughout participant responses. Participants commented on specialists demonstrating a stronger awareness of information and the likelihood of support in these instances. Denise shared the following when asked to describe both their experiences receiving support from a one stop employees as well as their confidence in their ability to assist, “so far, my experiences have been positive, so I think I feel like moderately confident at times. At times they did have to escalate it to their supervisors, so that's why I say moderately.”

Participants openly differentiated between generalists and specialists by their enrollment service subject matter knowledge level. Alexandra relayed that in one of her interactions, she received support from the first employee she encountered at the one stop, identifying them as a financial aid specialist. When asked to elaborate on her confidence in her response, she indicated that she “felt like I was pretty confident because they were people who actually specialized in financial aid, so I didn't have to be moved around constantly to get it figured out.” Her response underscored a shared notion among participants, specifically that the lack of being redirected to another one stop employee is a hallmark of receiving support from a specialist. Alexandra further elaborated on the importance of specialization and stated:

Having people trained to specialize in these specific topics probably makes [receiving support] go by much faster than [receiving support from] someone who hasn't. It makes it easier for me at least to talk to someone about financial aid with someone who actually knows what financial aid is compared to someone who wouldn't. And we would both be
shrugging shoulders because they’re like “I don't know,” and I'm like, “great, I don't know either.” So yeah.

In some instances, participants openly defined a perceived lack of knowledge by generalists as a barrier in navigating the one stop. Denise opined on her decision to request a supervisor during her visits. She clarified why she felt it necessary to circumvent the established process of beginning with a one stop generalist, “it's challenging and also there's a gap in that knowledge and maybe as far as what they can do to escalate it further or decisions that need to take place, they're not able to do, so that's why they escalated.” Beyond the contributions of generalists and specialists, a third group of one stop employees was referenced multiple times throughout participant interviews. This final group of one stop representatives, student employees, was regarded by participants as being the least likely to provide adequate support. Participant responses to working with student employees are detailed in the following section.

**Student Employees**

A lack of confidence in the ability of one stop student workers to provide adequate support emerged throughout participant responses. Those who had experiences working with student employees described their interactions as negative due to several factors. One common response to interview questions about student worker support was a perceived lack of knowledge in providing clear, accurate responses. May Jones, who disclosed during the interview that they are a student worker at Littleroot University, described being rushed after not receiving the answer to a financial aid inquiry, requiring her to return to the one stop at a later time. May Jones reported:

I think the main thing would probably just to be with the student helpers. Sometimes it does feel really rushed and it feels like they just want to get you off the door. And
sometimes that's a little confusing. I still leave confused when that happens and I have to go back in and wait in line again, wait to be helped, just to ask the same things over again by an actual staff member who's there.

Alexandra further elaborated on the perceived lack of quality in support received by student employees by sharing her sentiments. Alexandra stated:

When you go actually in person to that front desk and you tell them the issue you have, it would be nicer if they're more present because some of the [student] workers there aren't really as present as you would need them to. It's kind of awkward too. I know where financial aid is because right when you enter, you go to the student workers and I'm like, “yeah, I just need to go behind you because that’s where…financial aid is dealt with.”

When asked to further elaborate on her concerns with student employees, Alexandra remarked that a lack of training prevents them from being able to assist, furthering, “I mostly feel the students need to be a little bit more trained when it comes to handling people on their specific questions that they have.”

Similarly, Denise addressed that she did not possess confidence in the ability of one stop student employees. She mentioned she historically had questioned the support and requested to be assisted by a non-student employee. Denise stated:

I kind of question how much [student employees] know and I feel like when I talk about my problems or concerns, it's not really being answered the way that I feel like it should be. And so sometimes I will ask, “Hey, can I speak to an officer?”

Jayne relayed that because student assistants provide support over the phone, it can be challenging to obtain support from them when she cannot physically visit the one stop. She shared:
And sometimes if you [call] the financial aid department, you'll get a student who doesn't know about financial aid stuff and you're left kind of confused because you called the financial aid department, but they can't tell you anything.

With an understanding of how participants experienced the individuals who staff their institution’s one stop, the next section takes a deeper look into the interactions between postsecondary students with disabilities and one stop staff. Specifically, how participants perceived customer service and addressed hours of operation set by each institution’s one stop are also explored.

**Customer Service and Hours of Operation**

Participants addressed their experiences with customer service at the one stop through multiple lenses. For example, many participants incorporated both (1) awareness, and (2) knowledge of disabilities by one stop employees as heavily factoring into their ability to provide adequate support. In some instances, postsecondary students with disabilities provided their understanding of the level of training one stop employees are provided regarding assisting students with disabilities. Responses did not include references to awareness of actual training programs, either formal or informal. Rather, the thoughts expressed were based on their understanding of previous interactions with postsecondary employees within their institutions. May Jones described a greater lack of awareness of autism spectrum disorder that existed beyond the scope of the one stop as a contributing factor in their perception of a lack of training. May Jones shared of one stop employees:

I don't think they receive training for that. A lot of the times it's more of like a surprise when I say that I am on the spectrum or I do have a disability and a lot of the times it's left with me to navigate myself through it than them helping me navigate through it
where it kind of feels like I have to tell them, “oh, I need a lot more clarification” or “I need a lot more with this and I need this, this and this.” If we're going to be having me understand anything. And I feel like with general knowledge of people on the spectrum, there is a general behavior kind of system that usually everyone kind of falls under or similarities with that and if they got ahold of those it would be a lot better.

Participants addressed the hours of operation of their university’s one stop, with each institution’s one stop adhering to slightly different hours. As previously stated, one stops generally follows a standard 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, with some opening and closing either earlier or later. All three offices remained open during the lunch hour. However, Kitsune recalled one instance where they could only visit at noon to address a billing concern, only to discover the one stop was closed, requiring a follow-up visit at another time.

Many responses suggested that postsecondary students with disabilities did not believe the scheduled hours of operation for their one stops were what they defined as student-friendly. In these instances, student-friendly was determined by participant responses and referred to as existing within parameters that support students with opportunities to seek assistance when they are not involved in curricular activities, such as lectures and laboratory sessions.

A recommended change that emerged in the interviews, one conveyed by multiple participants, was the request to have extended evening hours and provide support services over the weekend. Participants addressed mild frustrations in being limited to seeking support during the day, referencing their curricular responsibilities as occurring in concert with the one stop’s current hours of operation. Maria, a graduate student who worked full-time during the day and begins class at 7:00 PM, sacrificed their preferred method of receiving support due to their inability to access the one stop during their scheduled hours, stating, “yeah, unfortunately with
my program I'm there when everything's closing, so I can't really make it in person. I would prefer to go in person.” Liam, an undergraduate student who preferred to schedule their classes in the evening, expanded upon the lack of support and services for students who are not physically present or available during the day:

I think [the one stop’s hours] are student-friendly because I think [they’re] 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM or 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. And I feel like that is enough time to where if you need to get up early to go to an appointment before you have to go to class, it's there. And I think the only problem would be if you have a late class or classes back-to-back to back, which I'm sure people don't really have that then it wouldn't be available. But all pretty much I've been able to make time and space for me to go there if I have a question no matter what out of my day.

Though fewer in number, some participants acknowledged that the set hours of operation were acceptable and supported student success. May Jones identified that they believed the one stop’s availability worked well with their schedule:

I think [the one stop’s hours] are student friendly because I think [they’re] 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM or 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. And I feel like that is enough time to where if you need to get up early to go to appointment before you have to go to class, it's there. And I think the only problem would be if you have a late class or classes back-to-back to back, which I'm sure people don't really have that then it wouldn't be available. But all pretty much I've been able to make time and space for me to go there if I have a question no matter what out of my day.

The preceding sections of this Chapter addressed the multiple ways participants experienced their institution’s one stops. In the following section, participants move from
assessing their actual experiences to identifying potential improvement opportunities at their institution’s one stop.

Identification of Opportunities for One Stop Improvements

This section is dedicated to the sixth and final theme, identification of opportunities for one stop structural and location improvements. It begins with participants discussing hypothetical inquiries surrounding a deconstructed one stop model. The section concludes with participants identifying opportunities for improvements to the one stop, specifically addressing physical space and location modifications.

What if the One Stop No Longer Existed?

The following section addresses how participants responded to the hypothetical question included in their interview: what would happen if the one stop ceased functioning as it currently does and all departments were relocated to different buildings? Participants articulated varying perspectives on what this change would mean for them and their peers. In addition to the wide spectrum of responses, participants also expressed internal conflict within their interpretations of the consequences of this change.

In some cases, those who began with an expectation that such a change would not impact them expanded on their interpretation of what such a modification would accomplish. When this occurred, they ultimately identified areas of potential concern for them and their fellow students. This happened after it was determined that participants continuously responded to this question without consideration of external factors such as the accessibility of the physical campus and the impact that the change would have on additional students, including fellow students with disabilities and mobility impairments. Through a series of probing questions, participants began to reassess their prior responses critically. These modified responses emphasized a certain
vulnerability in participants when shifting the focus of their experience as predicated on their needs towards a more universal approach.

Some participants acknowledged that restructuring would not greatly impact their ability to continue seeking support. In some of these instances, participants shared that their experiences with receiving one stop assistance have exclusively centered on one single department. Alexandra responded to the question by stating, “for me, no, because I only used really that building for financial aid, I would really need to know where financial aid was located.”

Participant preference on how they receive support services also influenced how they responded to this question. Barbie’s lack of reliance on in-person support served as the foundation of their response. They stated that they “wouldn’t know how to answer the question because [they] already experience [the one stop] in really strict separation,” a call back to a previous comment they shared regarding their misunderstanding of the one stop’s centralized structure. Barbie relayed the following:

There are very few things I do in person, but the things that I have done in person…would be really annoying if [they] were all in different buildings. That's just, oh, that's such a time drain whenever there's so many different things to do on campus during the day and then trying to figure out how to navigate zigzags in a place that big would be noticeable to have to accommodate. But other than that, I don't think I would notice.

Like Barbie, Bri thought that she, as an individual, would not be adversely impacted by this process, “I don't think it would impact my ability to receive services because to be honest, I mostly [receive support through] email or over the phone.” Within moments of this response, however, Bri began to express how this change would impact other students:
But I believe that it would affect other people because especially coming new to the campus, it would just be a little bit more difficult. If it's associated in one specific area, it just makes it easier for everyone, I feel.

Dev’s responses added to the sentiment that, given her decision to seek virtual support, she did not believe such a change would impact her personally. However, Dev felt the one stop model decreased the likelihood of experiencing run-around even when utilizing phone or email support:

When everything is together, it just makes it easier to navigate. So, you don't really have to bounce from place to place especially since most of it can just be found online, or you can just make one call and not to worry about anything else.

Gerald, who did not report a physical disability or mobility impairment, centered his ability to easily navigate multiple buildings as a rationale for not having concerns regarding this hypothetical model. In his response, Gerald indicated that he understood how and when he needed to communicate with specific departments to obtain particular services.

To be honest, I don't think that's a problem because I could just walk [to them]. It's not a big deal. I understand for some people it could be a challenge because not everything's there anymore. But to be honest, for Registrar [services], they just do it for me. I send a transcript from the junior college to the University and they just override [transfer coursework] instantly. For the one stop, specifically for the financial aid and billing, I could just see it way before the deadline. And if any questions, I just go to the financial aid and ask them. And then for the other services…I don't really use [them].

Jayne’s initial interpretation of the hypothetical did not pick up on the relocation of each department (previously included within the one stop model) to separate physical buildings. She
indicated that she favored the redesign due to her experience with solely receiving financial aid support. Once this was cleared up, Jayne clarified the parameters that addressed her needs:

But if it is different sides of campus, I can definitely see there being a problem and I would not recommend it. For example, the Littleroot University Academic Affairs Building used to house the accessibility services and the first-year student counselors, and it clearly stated which was which, and they were a minute apart. If I ever had to do those two things in the same day, it was very easy for me to get them done. But I can clearly separate in my head that they were different things. I would love to see a model like that where it's the same building, same floor with separate very clearly stated rooms for each one. But again, if it's going to be in different corners of the campus or far apart, I don't wouldn't see it working.

Conversely, participants who shared their concerns about this new model identified several additional barriers that such a change would impose on postsecondary students seeking support. These barriers included the perceived loss of a central hub of support, an increase in being shuffled around campus (the ‘run around’), increased time needed to address enrollment service concerns, increased stress physically visiting multiple locations, and a decline in the quality of service. Alexandra identified the benefit of the one stop’s physical location and support model as reducing the time needed to resolve solutions. She shared:

It makes it so much easier to navigate through the resources we do have and it'll be easier to let someone know, “hey, you need to talk to these people now go to this floor, this room in this building.” You could get a quicker turnaround time, but then compared to go across campus and go here because most likely the students are going to wait on that compared to just going in that same building.
May Jones, a participant who reported being a frequent presence at their university’s one stop due to several processing issues with their financial aid, viewed the hypothetical change as denying them an established and trusted first point of contact when seeking support. May Jones shared:

I see it impacting everything. I feel like the university one stop is the hub to where you go to get directed, and it's kind of where I always go if I don't even know where to start. I always go to them and be like, “I have a question with this. How does this help me?” So, I think without the one stop I would just kind of be really confused on where to start.

Postsecondary students with disabilities’ awareness of where to seek appropriate support, as understood through participant responses, existed on a spectrum. Students such as May Jones, who relied on their institution’s one stop, acknowledged that their reliance on the one stop goes beyond the services offered but understood that centralized support units can provide direction and additional assistance.

By and large, participants referred to the increase in being shuffled from department to department if a new model was developed. This run-around introduced several new factors impacting students’ abilities to seek support. For example, run around increased the perceived amount of time it could take to reach these departments if they were relocated to farther points from student-approved parking spots. Alexandra, who initially responded that she only used the one stop for financial aid related services, expressed that she would have “a little problem” with having to walk further due to her physical impairments, stating about the current experience of reaching the one stop “even when I'm flaring up that walk can be difficult.”
In her response, Alexandra continued elaborating on her perception of what such a change would accomplish. She emphasized the potential increase in stress related to seeking one stop support following this hypothetical change:

I think it would be because they're used to using that building as the main go-to, so if you separate that building to four different locations, they’re going to be running all around campus to get to them compared to just going to this one building and getting all the stuff they need figured out. And the timing too. You spend a lot of time going back and forth compared to just staying in one building, so that would increase a lot of stress for these students.

Fellow participants who reported physical disabilities not only shared similar trepidations with the perceived increase of run around but focused on how additional factors beyond their control, such as weather, would play heavily in navigating towards separate departments. Demi, who preferred to seek virtual support due to her IBD, shared her concern with having to actively seek out support, a process she referred to as “hunting down,” and the impact that this model would have on her. Demi relayed:

I think it would be kind of annoying. Instead of going one place and now having them all over and you have to hunt them down. The campus is not huge, but it's still pretty big and it takes me 10 minutes or so to walk from one end to the other. It’s a little tiring, especially when it's hot outside. I feel like it would be kind of annoying.

This concern with the additional time needed to seek out support was voiced by other participants, such as Sasha, who noted the increase in difficulty this change would play in her ability to conceptualize seeking support; she would need to “plan my day a little more around, okay, where am I going to go? What timeframe do I have to go take care of this service? I think
it would require a lot more planning on my part.” Celina, a fourth-year student at Fallarbor University, echoed the responses of her fellow participants, both in her awareness of the increased difficulty that such a change would pose for her, as well as the complicated feelings when identifying a potentially positive change that a reduction in student volume at the one stop in this hypothetical structure of support would provide. Celina indicated:

If they were completely separate, I think that would be a little bit more difficult to navigate. Just because let's say you have multiple problems with admissions and financial aid, and you would have to go to two different buildings and ask for services. I would say having it altogether would make it easier. But I can also see how it can be a little beneficial just because if people are having a lot of problems with all those situations, it can be pretty packed and busy. Having separate buildings can help them focus on individuals better. I think navigation or like navigating to a building would actually be more difficult if you had multiple problems, I would say that it's very useful in trying to get the services that I need in one spot.

On multiple occasions within the interview, Kitsune shared their awareness of how easily they become physically lost and responded by identifying that other students may experience the same struggle as well. To him, understanding where to go is critical, and separating departments decreases the likelihood of awareness of the campus as a whole. Kitsune commented:

I think that would cause quite a few problems for students like me who get lost easily because if that were to happen and we needed to go to, say, some very specific part of [the University], we may not know where to go to reach it. So, I believe that it would be inefficient to break up the one stop into multiple locations and rather have it in one central location, one single spot.
Maria’s experiences as an undergraduate and a graduate student supported their disapproval of moving away from the one stop model. Experiencing a physical change in the location of service departments between their undergraduate and graduate programs emphasized a personal preference that such a change would not necessarily impact highlighted that such a change would have an adverse impact.

I think if I were to go in person, it would definitely be a lot to get around from upper campus, especially if I'm trying to see different people. And also, just trying to find it because when I went to the one stop one time for their drop-in hours, it took me like probably 15 to 20 minutes to find the room because when I was an undergrad, it was on the first floor for financial aid and admission, and this time around [as a graduate student] it was on the second floor. I was very confused because I wasn't familiar with this [new] space of a financial aid question. I literally could go like to the next window or on the other side of the one stop to go and ask about financial aid, so it was a little bit more centralized where I didn't have to go to a whole other side of a building or on campus to talk to someone. Especially with the cashier's office that is also right across from admissions and financial aid. the cashier's office that is also right across from admissions and financial aid. It was more accessible to just have everything there. But yeah, like I said, for me it's a different dynamic now because I don’t really go in person anymore.

In a few cases, participant responses focused on the negative impact that this split would have on their ability to receive holistic support. In her response, Liam stressed the importance of centralized services for students with disabilities. Liam stated:

That would be an atrocity for all students with disabilities. And in fact, they could build off of their centralization already by placing the University Disability Services Office
next to them, and other services like the bookstore. Those should all be more centralized than they currently are. Disbanding them would be horrible, and I say this because while my own disability has its own reasons why going to that office is not feasible, I have a lot of other people in my cohort who have varying disabilities or have experienced other people with disabilities and understand how important it is to be able to reach services centralized.

Drawing parallels between the impact that financial aid and registration services can have on one another, Chara perceived the hypothetical model as increasing the likelihood of receiving incomplete assistance:

I would probably find it frustrating for the fact that they're just saying, “oh no, we can't help you” and not providing a simple explanation on why or where I can get help you. I would find it really frustrating for the fact that it’s so much harder to try to navigate which service offices are where. But then also I feel Littleroot University registration and financial services should sort of mildly know both that they're not part of but the fact that you can't exactly register if you don't have financial aid for it, but then also you are trying to maximize the amount you're putting into what you registered for? Overall, a frustrating process.

Jake, a student who required the use of a wheelchair, also spoke to the purpose of the one stop when adamantly speaking against the hypothetical dismantling of their institution’s one stop:

That would not be good. I already have to go out of my way to get up and down upper-lower campus, so if places were spread out, that would just add a lot of extra time. Even though I'm not walking my travel time does take energy out of me significantly. I'm sure
that I would maybe get used to where a building was, but you know, always finding a
new office on a campus and trying to have to look at the directories are very, you know,
difficult and kind of nervous…that uncertainty and annoyance especially because, I have
a very hard time getting cell service on campus and so having to look at like the online
map when it's like not updating or I can't load it. I just can't feel stranded. And then, I
think it would just be dumb, and I'd be like, “get together, guys.” It makes me feel that all
of the systems are connected. That the registrar's office is right next to financial aid, so I
would…or cashier's office is right next to financial aid and when I was dealing with this
past situation, they're like, “oh, just walk right over there or just go upstairs here.” It
makes me feel that they're all looking at my same file. All information I tell someone is
going to be on some record that is associated with me. That, and I feel more confident in
that I won't necessarily have to repeat the same story 10,000 times to get help. It also
reduces the amount of time that I would have to spend in an area, which is nice. And
there have been a couple instances where I think “oh, maybe I'll have to schedule an
appointment for the next day…”

Participant responses varied when asked to reflect on a hypothetical modification to their
institution’s one stop model. In some instances, participants shared their concerns regarding the
decentralization of services. This was not, however, a sentiment shared by all participants. Some
participants believed the centralized model did not benefit them or their institution. Regardless of
their interpretation of this fictional change, participants now thought critically about
modifications to the one stop. In the following section, these thoughts were further extrapolated
as participants began to share how they would improve the physical one stop.
**Improvements to the One Stop**

Participants imparted recommendations to improve their institution’s one stop. Their responses were predicated on the goal of specifically enhancing the experience for postsecondary students with disabilities. Most responses centered on recommendations specifically to altering the physical space and location of each institution’s one stop. However, those who attended an institution with a one stop that included a heavily visited virtual setting shared additional feelings about improving the online experience for students as well.

Participants addressed changes to the physical structure and layout, the location, the accessibility of the physical building, external signage, and parking-related elements. Overwhelmingly, participants responded to this inquiry by addressing limitations they had experienced in the past and, in some cases, attempted to create a physical environment that better suited the needs of other postsecondary students with disabilities, including those with varying disability identities that they did not possess. Though seemingly minute, these modifications addressed the culmination of creating a safe, effective space. This is best said by Liam, who advocated on behalf of postsecondary students with disabilities at her University:

> Sometimes we don't notice all these things that are compounded make it more difficult and somebody with less grit might just turn around and walk the other way and not continue to go to school.

To begin, the physical structure of the one stop is critiqued. To adequately address the physical structure's impact on postsecondary students with disabilities, responses also included references to two related elements. These additional facets included the physical building layout that housed the one stop and the participant’s ability to ensure privacy when seeking in-person support.
Physical Structure, Layout, and Privacy

Throughout the interviews, participants noted how they experienced the physical structure and layout of their institution’s one stop. Several participant responses emphasized the existence of a front desk or front counter, when applicable, as a focal point and acknowledged the surrounding area, comparable to a waiting room, as also being influential regarding the experience of their visits. Responses from participants were mixed, with some indicating that the present physical structure and layout of their institution’s one stop were sufficient for their needs. Others, however, identified multiple opportunities to modify not only the front desk or front counter but also the way students arrived to receive support, such as a modification to the queue for students who participate in unscheduled drop-in hours.

Participants addressed the importance of having sufficient space in the one stop for students to feel comfortable speaking freely about confidential matters without other peers listening in. Celina acknowledged that the size of the one stop at Fallarbor University as it is sufficient, specifically referring to it as “a good size,” but recommended a larger space to assist students during stressful times. When asked to elaborate further on an example of a stressful time, Celina referenced the first week of classes, a period of time for Fallarbor University’s one stop in which in-person traffic is constant. Although the one stop at Fallarbor University adopted an appointment system, a queue is still required for students, one Celina identified as unorganized. Specifically, they addressed their concerns with the physical queue by stating, “I wish the line was a little bit more structured because it was kind of like zig-zag in a small space.”

Participants reported mixed reviews on the purpose of the physical space of the one stop’s waiting area. Maria valued that the space was welcoming, hypothesizing a relationship
between a student’s comfort within a physical space and an understanding of available services. Specifically, Maria expressed:

I feel that would be a warmer space for students to actually interact more with the support services, like financial aid, admissions, where if they're already hanging out there, they might be more prone to know where to go.

Conversely, Bri wanted a strict separation between areas where students could socialize and areas where students received support. She stated, “it might be a little confusing why they might just completely overlook it because it just kind of looks like, ‘oh, it's just an area to just sit-down and lounge.’”

Concerns surrounding student data privacy were directly tied to the physical structure and layout of a one stop. Whether students were having intimate conversations in large lobbies with other students and individuals present or relocated to cubicles or smaller offices, participants noted the importance of establishing parameters to protect the privacy of their information. Celina disclosed that in past visits, they could hear about other students who were having issues with their student accounts. When asked to expand upon privacy at the one stop, she stated:

Now that I think about it, there's really no privacy when it comes to going to the one stop because you are kind of divided by a little wooden thing and you can still hear other people’s conversations. When I went to do my scholarship signature, I could hear the other person's conversation and I could tell that she was very stressed. I wish that they would do a little bit more for privacy just to make it easier for them to talk to [students]. So yeah, more privacy, more space.
In some instances, participants with auditory impairments stressed the importance of students needing a quiet, secluded area to facilitate conversations and their comprehension of information. Alexandra urged for additional privacy and indicated she wanted:

A little bit more privacy for financial aid because everyone's in a [small location] so you could kind of here what someone else is going through when you're talking about your own issues. Yeah, the privacy definitely to make it at least so I don't have to hear what the… because I feel like that should be private when it comes to financial aid where I don't want to hear the struggles my issues with financial aid that I'm not getting. It also makes it easier for me to understand what the person in front of me is saying because if I hear multiple background noises, one of the disorders comes through and I can't actually process what's being said.

Dev, who identified as being deaf/hard of hearing, also spoke to the distractions that a loud environment had on their ability to receive support and urged to “make [the one stop] more private because the way it's set up it’s very open. It can be very loud in there which can make it hard for people to focus and stuff. It’s very cramped together.” Liam, who did not initially identify as having an audible disability but rather drew a parallel between the connection to sound and their ADHD diagnosis, addressed the relationship that excess noise and lighting can have on their ability to concentrate within a space. Liam shared:

I do like the fact that there's not a lot of over stimulation from the lighting outside, and there's not a lot of noise. I've only been there a couple of times but I don't remember tons of radios playing and video screens flashing at me. Those things make it hard for somebody with ADHD or other cognitive disabilities to even remember why they showed up somewhere. Noise pollution is actually very over stimulating and can cause people
with certain disabilities to be unable to think clearly or remember why they were somewhere or communicate effectively because of all the additional noise. So, keeping in mind that this is a learning environment and not a commercial business and what the model is, we’re not trying to buy your product and we're not trying to have our senses manipulated. We're trying to show up and learn.

Alexandra also recommended implementing privacy resources to ensure other students in the one stop are not gazing while she received support, suggesting the one stop installs “those little privacy screens so at least you can't look at the other person or you can’t tell who it is.” Additionally, Alexandra noted that the physical space included additional private office space they do not recall being asked to utilize when seeking support. Whether the decision to use these spaces depends upon student request or initiated by a one stop employee is unknown.

Alexandra’s recommendation for an improved experience, however, placed the burden on the one stop employee asking “if this is a private matter or something that could be heard by others. I know they have little rooms next to the side, so if it's a private matter, we could go into this enclosed phase.” These private offices were referenced by other participants, with Chara recalling two meeting rooms behind the one stop’s front counter space.

May Jones, who openly disclosed their experiences as an individual with autism spectrum disorder having played an immense role in their ability to coexist with peers in shared spaces, addressed their concerns with privacy and space in the one stop. May Jones characterized the space as “cluttered” and contributing to a feeling of “claustrophobia.” May Jones recommendation and rationale behind a change to the physical layout also included the following:
I think making it more of an open space. Sometimes there's 10 to 20 kids in the room, it can be a little cluttered and it feels a little claustrophobic. So, I think making it more open and [including] more private spaces. I've encountered people where I'm being helped and the person next to me is just kind of being a lot louder than everyone else when talking about their opinions and feelings and it can be a little invasive. Probably invasive for them too since they're frustrated, they're not getting their help and they just want to know an answer or something like that.

Not all responses addressed deficiencies in maintaining student privacy. Demi appreciated the mechanics of both the queue and waiting area of their one stop, and shared, “I feel like it is because it’s like a bank, they call you up and then everyone else who is behind you stays over there. They're at a safe distance to not hear everything.” Denise discussed that after learning about private office spaces being an option, they always request private office space when seeking support, noting, “I think I get a lot of privacy. Usually, they close the door and everything and try to make sure nobody can hear.”

Gerald articulated his concerns about the one stop’s open layout. In addition to the enclosed office spaces for students to have private conversations, the one stop at Littleroot University also included cubicle spaces, which Gerald spoke to as contributing to his perception of students receiving support:

Not really, but it's just their cubicles are open. So obviously people could hear eavesdrop, but to be honest, it's not really nothing personal. It's just the way it was structured. So, I feel like if I were to change something, it would change to where they have cubicles instead. Or it could be like, you don't have to hear anything.
Similar to the physical structure, layout, and privacy, the location of the one stop was referenced by multiple participants as posing challenges for postsecondary students with disabilities.

**Location**

Physically navigating to the one stop informed several recommendations as to the ideal location of the one stop. The physical location of the one stop as it related to the campus at large posed a concern for some participants, most notably those who identified as having a physical impairment, either permanent or temporary. Participants noted that the incline their campus is built upon negatively impacted the ease of access to the one stop. Alexandra spoke directly to their experience, “what happens is that we're kind of on a hill thing, and as someone with a physical disability, it makes it very difficult to go to…especially when I'm flaring up.”

For some students, the one stop’s location was not considered a strategic decision. Celina shared that it was not unlikely for students to miss its location and stated, “I can see how students can be kind of like lost looking for it just because it's in between two buildings.” Participants identified the location of their one stop as an unofficial marker separating the campus into two distinct regions. They generally referred to these regions as upper and lower campuses. Demi described satisfaction with the current location of the one stop as being between the upper and lower campus. She remarked on its proximity to additional high-traffic buildings heavily utilized by students, including the student union and the library. Demi stated:

I don't know where else it would go other than smack dab in the middle of like the campus quad area. I feel like it already is because you have upper campus and then it's there and then you have lower campus, so I feel like it's already in the middle. I don't think I would move it.
The location of the one stop served as one of two focal points that emerged when discussing the physical proximity of the one stop. Participants also frequently referenced the location of the one stop with student-eligible parking.

**Relation to Parking**

Participants expanded upon their thoughts on the one stop’s location in relation to their universities by emphasizing its proximity to student parking lot options. When addressing parking, participants spoke to both established student parking lots and parking spaces around the one stop. Multiple participants emphasized the importance of being able to park near the one stop, recognizing that several limitations exist that prevent this action. These restrictions included limited campus space, the cost of a parking permit, and restricted access to accessibility spots near the one stop. Other participants, such as Gerald, who does not identify as having a physical impairment or disability, shared that the distance between student parking and their one stop did not pose any significance in their experience seeking support. In some interviews, participants did not discuss parking.

However, Alexandra described Littleroot University’s campus parking as being “very limited” due to the institution’s location. They went on to say that a single, oversized parking lot exists as the only option for commuter students and that its location is at the very entrance of the university. Although Alexandra reported that she experienced regular flareups due to her psoriatic arthritis and fibromyalgia, her lack of an accessible parking placard, which would open up several options for closer parking, required her to walk a farther distance. May Jones shared an additional concern with the institution’s limited number of parking spots. They stated that because there was only a limited number of parking permits available to on-campus students, they were required to submit an appeal, an experience they referred to as stressful and difficult.
An increase in student parking near the one stop would reduce the physical stress on students like Alexandra, who would not have to travel as far to receive support.

Barbie addressed another aspect of parking through the following sentiment, “the other thing that is out of pocket is parking. Parking and transportation stuff is…that's whole another bear. I've had many very public exchanges with that department.” They shared that they do not purchase a yearly parking permit because the University’s established cost for access to the student parking lot was unreasonably high. When asked about their access to a parking permit, they stated: “no, not for me anyway, and I would assume not for others. I know a lot of people who have opted out of parking.” Understanding the financial limitations of postsecondary students, including doctoral candidates like Barbie, decisions to sacrifice convenience and comfort for lack of funding are made out of necessity. Although they preferred to complete all one stop business remotely, they relayed that in instances where an in-person visit is needed, Barbie parked outside the campus at a low-cost daily spot and traveled to campus using a scooter. They reported that their decision to do so was not only popular among other postsecondary students but was in direct rebellion with the University’s parking policies and rates. They emphasized that this option, compared to purchasing an official parking permit, was “definitely a lot cheaper for people who don't have to be on campus every day. But for people that do, it’s a hit, it's definitely a felt expense.”

As previously stated, a lack of accessible parking spots near the one stop created a negative experience for students who were required to park farther in a lot they were granted access to use. Liam’s recommendation for an improved one stop experience at their university was to place as many accessibility parking spots as close to the one stop as physically possible. They understood that some other students and families require this support and described the
lack of accessibility spots as disappointing. Sasha, who temporarily experienced a physical disability on two separate occasions and received a temporary accessibility placard for parking during both instances, emphasized the increased convenience and support such an opportunity provided. Sasha echoed fellow participants who emphasized the relationship between being able to park closer to the one stop and restricting the likelihood of having to spend a significant amount of time searching for a parking spot in a limited lot.

**Building Accessibility**

Beyond the physical structure and layout of the one stop and its designated waiting area, participants spoke directly to the overall accessibility of the building in which these departments are housed. Their reflections addressed areas of improvement that would not only increase the likelihood for postsecondary students with disabilities to experience the physical space to its maximum potential fully but also to move each university intentionally towards meeting universal design standards. In all three universities, participants attended, the one stop was located in a building with more than one floor, with the front desk/front counter space being housed exclusively on the first floor and represented department spaces existing anywhere from the first to the fourth floor. Participant recommendations centered on building accessibility and emphasized functionality over aesthetics.

It is crucial to note that, by and large, participants did not directly reference universal design standards as an existing phenomenon. Instead, they casually spoke of recommendations that aligned with this established practice. One participant, Chara, who seemed to be knowledgeable about not only universal design applications to physical spaces but also learning environments, did identify the institution as committed to growing in support but had not yet achieved the desired results. Chara stated:
Yeah, I do believe that most things at [the university have] gotten a lot better at this, but most [spaces] don't make it universally accessible, especially for students with a disability like in a wheelchair or using crutches.

Chara’s critique of their institution’s failure to achieve a physical design that they perceived could have much-better-supported students with disabilities resulted from a missed opportunity to engage in deeper conversations about deep topics with students. Chara, similar to their peers, acknowledged that they believed decisions regarding the accessibility standards of the building were made without consulting students with disabilities.

**Passageways, Staircases, and Elevators**

Participants addressed the structure of the building’s passageways, staircases, and, in some cases, elevators as being “architecturally interesting” instead of practical and strategically placed. Barbie, who experienced the one stop building for enrollment management related services and as a faculty instructor teaching in multiple classrooms throughout her time as a doctoral student, expressed that though the building was visually impressive, it lacked a user-friendly design. They stated:

I used to teach in that building too, and they have this really steep set of stairs that looks kind of architecturally aesthetic. That was the priority in designing it that way. And then there's this big, long walkway that kind of slopes up toward the back of the building, which is the main entrance. And the sloped area that I guess they use as like, well, since there's a slope here and it's not a stairwell, then this is our accessibility. That's one of those areas that's really steep.

Barbie shared that they could not recall details about the elevators, stating that “if they didn't leave an impression, it's probably a pretty average setup.” Elevators were referenced in
multiple interviews as useful for postsecondary students with disabilities who need to access various floors of a single building. Sasha equated the multiple elevators within the building at their University housing the one stop as increasing its accessibility.

External accessibility also played a role in how postsecondary students with disabilities perceived the overall accessibility of each building, positing that to experience a building, one must be able to enter. Participants with and without physical impairments emphasized the difficulty in reaching the one stop for postsecondary students who are wheelchair users. However, participant responses regarding the accessibility of the building varied. Denise could not recall how these students could access the building, sharing, “I don't think there's any ramp where someone can get up there from a wheelchair.” Dev said they recalled a ramp existing, but it posed a concern for students who required a wheelchair, “and some of the slopes [towards the one stop are] a little too steep for a wheelchair.”

**Automatic Doors and Door Opening Buttons**

One way students negatively experienced the one stop spaces was the lack of automatic doors within the building. Unlike the main door to the one stop at the entrance of each building, this particular element referred to office spaces and additional doors located beyond the automatic doors that required physical activity. Participants remarked that all one-stop building entrances should include an automatic opening function. Maria, who experienced a temporary physical impairment causing them to lose the use of both hands for some time, recalled being able to enter the one stop building, but experiencing challenges in entering a private discussion space that did not utilize an automatic opening function. Attempting to participate in a one-on-one session with a one stop generalist, they recalled having to wait for support to open the door,
emphasizing how the experience left them with a negative recollection of the meeting. Jake expressed a similar concern with accessing the one stop building at their University:

   None of the doors have push buttons. There is a push button to enter the building, but then when you go up the elevator, there's doors to all the rooms and none of those have push buttons. I'm able to open the door myself, but I've when I was learning to be in my wheelchair, I spilled coffee all over myself multiple times. That was really embarrassing.

**Restrooms**

   Participants also elaborated upon elements they deemed useful and helpful for all students with disabilities beyond building accessibility. According to their experiences, one way this is achieved is through the access and availability of restrooms. Multiple participants emphasized the need for restroom access by postsecondary students with disabilities for multiple reasons. Sasha acknowledged that their university’s one stop building included restrooms on both the first and second floors, emphasizing that this was common across the campus. Sasha stated:

   Or for people that need access to a bathroom right away and they can't get to it because they have to go all the way up. I think having a restroom both on the upper and lower campuses and pretty much most of the school is really nice in terms of accessibilities as well.

   Liam stressed that the availability of a restroom is important but also identified elements of the actual restroom space necessary for supporting all postsecondary students with disabilities. Liam spoke directly to their ideal restroom space when describing the restrooms that currently occupy the one stop at their University:
I don't remember how many accessible stalls there were but I know people's accessibility needs vary, so some people may need the high toilet with the bars, some people may need a lower toilet with the bars and still need that large amount of space. Some people simply have injuries where they can't get past a standard door. It’s very hard to wait for one disabled stall if you're catering to disabled people; someone's bladder is going to burst. Those facilities need to be adjusted.

**Water Filling Stations**

Similarly to restrooms, Sasha identified water filling stations as playing a critical role in supporting postsecondary students with disabilities who required water access to consume medication. They stated:

I know this isn't part of accessibility, but one thing that I've noticed that most buildings have is a water filling station. And I think for people who need to take medication, having the water filling stations on all floors is really nice.

Beyond recommendations that focused on structural improvements, strategic relocation, and general accessibility, participants identified signage as another element requiring change.

**Signage**

Participants spoke in detail about the importance of signage within and in surrounding areas to the one stop. In some instances, participants who are rarely physically on campus experienced issues with navigating to the one stop, describing the established signage as ineffective. Chara stressed that the signage leading students to the one stop at Littleroot University needed to be “more noticeable” to allow fellow postsecondary students to utilize them efficiently. Barbie recalled the first time they physically arrived on campus to use the one stop,
noting that although they had physically visited on multiple occasions, this one particular time posed a challenge as they could not identify how to locate and access the one stop:

And then the signs make it really confusing. I was looking for the one stop building, I'd been on that campus for years, and by the time I had to start teaching there, I had to ask somebody where the one stop building was because the sign is so confusing about which entrance to use.

Participants also described signs as physically too small. Celina addressed the sign at the one stop building at Fallarbor University as existing on the “corner of the building, a little that says student services.” Not only did Celina identify the size of the signage as being unhelpful, but she also indicated that because of its location, it was ineffective. Celina’s recommendation included relocation:

I would probably place it closer to where majority of the students park, which is Fallarbor University student parking lot. I would definitely make the label a lot bigger for students so that they can see it from far if they want to go.

The strategic location of signs next to campus fixtures and popular spots was identified as improving the likelihood of success. Demi noted that their University’s large sign embodying the campus’ motto in a large display served as an appropriate location for a sign to direct students to the one stop. She elaborated on the popularity and recognizability of the space, saying “everyone knows where that is.” Conversely, Jayne addressed the lack of utilization of signage location as contributing to confusion regarding the location of the one stop:

I don't really think so, just because not many people know where it is. On the building, on the glass of the building, it clearly states that this is Littleroot University’s one stop, but again, no one really knows exactly where it is. Sometimes I'll be talking to someone and
be like, “yeah, I got to go to the Littleroot University one stop”. And they'll be like, “where's that?” And I'm like, “it's in the Littleroot University one stop building.” But if you're not actively looking for it on a map or you don't know someone who can tell you where it is, it's a little difficult to find.

Participants also expressed concerns with internal signage once a student reached the one stop, as all three one stops were situated inside administrative buildings that included non-one stop support departments. Barbie shared that there was an opportunity for improving efficiency in the navigation of the building with clear signs, “I think they could stand to improve their signage so that people know the most efficient ways to get in and out of the areas of the building that work for them.”

Internal signs can create challenges for students with vision issues. Jake recognized that there were several signs within the one stop, referring to them as “labels,” and shared their recollection of difficulty in navigating the one stop at their university:

On some of the labels, I remember having a hard time like knowing which window to go to. Yeah, I think like on the bottom stairs, the lower level, I think the signs are okay. I think they’re the same color as the glass they're on if I'm remembering correctly. So, it’s like an opaqueness, maybe?

Jayne’s contribution to the importance of clear, legible signage referenced designations to the appropriate office and included a description of the services offered, “I'd put up a sign of the different departments and what each department does.”

**Summary**

In this Chapter, study findings were presented through the development of six themes that emerged from 16 participant interviews with postsecondary students with disabilities. These
themes included: (1) origins and influences of support systems, (2) perception of enrollment service support, (3) conceptualization and preference of one stop service delivery, (4) misunderstandings of one stop fundamentals, (5) expectations of one stop service providers, and (6) identification of opportunities for one stop structural and location improvements. Utilization of non-one stop departments for student support services prevented participants from utilizing appropriate support through established channels. Participants shared that personal preferences and prior experience led them toward departments they believed could better support them. A lack of understanding of the one stop led to reported instances of confusion surrounding the responsibilities of departments and ownership of specific services. With participants misconstruing which individuals provided which specific support services, these students were not offered quality support. In the following Chapter, the study concludes with a discussion of the impact of the findings as they pertain to the theoretical framework and literature described in Chapter 2.
Chapter 5: Discussion

This study concludes with a discussion on the insight gained from the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities utilizing one stops and their relations to the research questions and theoretical framework. A review of the literature revealed a dearth of information on one stops, despite its decades-spanning tenure within the practical delivery of support services (Hossler & Bontrager, 2014; Lonabocker & Wager, 2007). This study attempted to contribute to the knowledge base of information on one stops. This was achieved by identifying how one stops are experienced by one particular group of students. Specifically, there is a noteworthy gap in knowledge focused on how one stops are perceived by postsecondary students who identify as having disabilities utilizing their services. This study addressed this gap by exploring the experiences of this group of students that historically received little attention in research on co-curricular services (Kimball et al., 2017).

This present study utilized a constructivist grounded theory methodology to explore how this population experienced the one stop of their postsecondary institution. Six themes emerged following a constructivist grounded theory analysis: (1) origins and influences of support systems, (2) perception of enrollment service support, (3) conceptualization and preference of one stop service delivery, (4) misunderstandings of one stop fundamentals, (5) expectations of one stop service providers, and (6) identification of opportunities for one stop structural and location improvements. Further analysis identified that although one stops provided some support to postsecondary students with disabilities, they were not being utilized in a manner that was consistent with their purpose. The origin of this inconsistency may be due to one of multiple issues, including a misunderstanding of communication between the one stop and this population
of students. These incongruencies seemingly push postsecondary students with disabilities to seek support elsewhere.

This Chapter begins by reviewing the research questions that guided the study. Next, a summary of the findings and how they relate to the current literature on one stops is presented. With a deeper understanding of how participant responses begin to address research questions, an overview of the significance of the findings follows. The Chapter then continues with implications, limitations, and recommended areas of future research and concludes with a call to action informed by the culmination of all elements of this study.

**Review of Research Questions**

The primary research question that guided this study was:

1. In what ways are one stops experienced by postsecondary students with disabilities?

In order to frame this broad inquiry within a focused, practical dialogue in which experience could be explored through specific enrollment management channels, four additional sub-research questions were posed.

(a) In what ways, if any, do one stops support the retention and persistence of postsecondary students with disabilities?

(b) In what ways, if any, do postsecondary students with disabilities experience the structural design of their institution’s one stop?

(c) In what ways, if any, does the location of the one stop influence how postsecondary students with disabilities navigate student services? and

(d) In what ways, if any, does the combination of supported departmental representation influence both the curricular and co-curricular successes of postsecondary students with disabilities?
Throughout 16 focused interviews, answers to these research questions generated the six themes previously mentioned. The constructivist grounded theory methodology emphasizes that “concepts become ‘actors’ who create the analysis of actions in the scene” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 285). Ultimately, these themes laid the foundation for a theory regarding how participants experienced one stops. These themes were scrutinized to identify further how these ‘actors’ came together within this study. A discussion of this study’s findings is presented in the following section.

Framing Findings Across Research Questions

This constructivist grounded theory study focused on one main research question and four sub-questions centered on developing a deeper understanding of the multiple ways postsecondary students with disabilities can experience a one stop. In this section, findings as they relate to the literature and theoretical framework that guided this study are reviewed in detail. Findings are organized by research question. Due to the content and themes relating to multiple research questions, the findings and relevant literature may be included in more than one section. To begin, this section discusses the experiences of postsecondary students utilizing one stop support through a broad lens. In the sections that follow, experiences with one stops are discussed and analyzed through each sub-research question, including its impact on retention and persistence, its physical structure, its location, and its impact on curricular and co-curricular experiences.

One Stops as Experienced by Postsecondary Students with Disabilities

At its core, this study addresses the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities by assessing each participant's conceptual knowledge of their institution's one stops. Participants shared (1) what they understood the one stop to be, (2) the services they offered, and
examples of their interactions with the department and its employees. These contributions pieced together an emerging theory identifying that participants were aware of the one stop services yet did not possess consistent and accurate understandings of its purpose and potential to assist. This section will discuss findings related to these experiences.

Unanimity regarding a singular experience of the one stop was not achieved among participants. Responses indicated that the manner in which postsecondary students with disabilities utilize services, the frequency in which they seek support, and their overall perceptions of the ability of one stop employees to assist varied greatly. As Grimes et al. (2020) explained, institutions of higher education are often set up for compliance with federal regulations regarding supporting postsecondary students with disabilities. This finding emphasizes that participant needs vary by disability identity and that presumed compliance does not always account for the needs of all individual students with disabilities.

Participants also noted their preconceived expectations of frontline employees' customer service as unpredictable. In particular, these responses reduced their confidence in receiving support from student assistants, which led to a requested escalation towards generalist and/or specialist support. The literature on one stops identified that centralizing services increases integration, efficiency, and satisfaction (Howard, 2017), yet findings contradict this expectation. This finding is meaningful because reporting structures at multiple institutions with one stops reflect a similar support structure incorporating student assistants into its frontline. Previous studies did not address the issue of how postsecondary students with disabilities perceive support from varying levels of one stop employees. Therefore, this issue is important and needs to be further explored.
The ability to be understood clearly when seeking enrollment support is paramount to students, and participants in this study further emphasized this expectation. However, participants reported feeling as though one stop employees were not always knowledgeable on how to provide the best support that met their individual needs as students with disabilities. They reported a lack of expertise on behalf of one stop employees to effectively navigate supporting students with disabilities. Studies that focused on student’s perceptions of staff knowledge of disability, such as Atabey (2017) and Lombardi and Lalor (2017), support these findings. This is important because the results of this study contribute to the literature that identifies a reoccurring systematic failure in postsecondary settings.

The preceding section explored findings as they applied to the overall experience of postsecondary students with disabilities at their institution’s one stop. The following sections tighten this Chapter's focus by addressing specific lenses applied to this study’s four sub-research questions. To begin, the ways in which participants addressed persistence and retention efforts are addressed.

**One Stops Influencing Persistence and Retention**

The following section discusses how participants addressed their ability to persist. Participants reported understanding that their one stop exists as a conduit of convenience to accomplish enrollment-related tasks by centralizing multiple departments into a single location. In these instances, they acknowledged that services governed by the one stop are necessary for remaining actively enrolled students. These responses support a positive relationship between persistence and the one stop. The literature is sparse with examples of one stop services impacting the persistence of postsecondary students with disabilities. However, Perry’s (2023) findings linked the involvement of a one stop with a decreased melt rate for marginalized
students. However, it is important to note that Perry's (2023) study focused on race rather than disability identity. Nevertheless, this connection suggests a possible link between holistic support and a student’s ability to persist.

Participants did not provide explicit responses defining the relationship between one stops and persistence. They repeatedly offered their individual histories with one stop employees to accomplish activities such as transfer credit articulation, setting up financial aid, and the critical need of ensuring a paid student account balance. Participants also shared their need to return to the one stop multiple times as necessary to complete important, time-sensitive tasks that impacted their enrollment. In some instances, participants needed to conduct business through multiple service models, including in-person, phone, and email support. The literature on enrollment management emphasizes connecting students to their campus as a hallmark of retention efforts (Henderson, 2017; Stanton et al., 2017). The findings in this study were inconsistent with the literature. One plausible explanation for this is simply a lack of understanding of what units comprise a one stop.

In consideration of persistence, the knowledge and scope of enrollment services varied widely amongst participants. When considering the multiple departments involved with the one stop, participants identified that they relied on certain non-one stop entities to aid them. In other cases, participants confused the one stop with other services tied to their success as students with disabilities, namely their institution’s disability resource center. Studies on how postsecondary students with disabilities understood the organization of institutional support services (Harbour, 2009) also found that this population often struggled with locating support through appropriate departments. This finding is important because it draws attention to students’ resourcefulness in seeking support when they cannot clearly articulate where to seek it.
In the context of receiving support external to the one stop, participants assigned value to the one stop in assisting them to succeed. However, it was evident that they were not referring to the one stop, as the disability services office was not incorporated into any of the three one stops represented in this study. These findings are also consistent with empirical studies that addressed postsecondary students with disabilities seeking out other external support services when exposed to negative experiences (Fleming et al., 2017). This amplifies a consistent need for this population to seek out support that is delivered in a manner in which they can receive and understand information.

**One Stops as Physical Structures**

Participant responses regarding the one stop as a physical structure are explored in this section. The recurring concern of achieving privacy at the one stop is addressed. Next, participant responses regarding the location of their institution’s one stop are discussed. Participants shared ways in which they experienced the structural design of their one stop. They frequently identified the importance of including elements of universal design by identifying present features that do not adhere to these standards. The empirical literature on the relationship between postsecondary students with disabilities and physical space is consistent with these findings, drawing parallels between universal design and postsecondary student satisfaction with their institution’s physical space (Anderson et al., 2015; Pearson & Samura, 2017; Thornton & Downs, 2010). This finding is meaningful in that it contributes to the literature that universal design elements are expected to be incorporated into a functional one stop that supports postsecondary students with disabilities.

Participants felt strongly that the one stop should exist as a functional administrative department and as a hub for all students to come together. Responses identified that the one stop
should be a shared space for students who seek support and community in a safe, supportive environment. These contributions are supported by earlier studies, such as Pearson and Samura (2017), that concluded that all physical settings are a form of social meaning, highlighting the realization of the socio-spatial dynamics of disability diversity. Additionally, this expressed desire for a physical hub of support within an area of heavy traffic by all students is also consistent with the literature on postsecondary students with disabilities seeking a sense of belonging with their peers. The literature revealed that institutional efforts that supported increased involvement with the campus community increases a postsecondary student with disability’s sense of belonging (Harbour, 2009; Kimball et al., 2017). This finding is important because it contributes to the overall perception of the one stop as an integral element of the campus.

How the one stop's physical structure affected participant’s abilities to seek confidential support arose throughout the study. Participants repeatedly identified privacy as a main point of contention when addressing the physical structure of their one stop's layout. They acknowledged their conversations with one stop employees as sensitive. They indicated unique support needs due to their disability identities, such as the need to be physically present to read lips. The literature on the relationship between privacy maintenance and comfortable physical space for postsecondary students with disabilities (Lonabocker & Wager, 2007) supports these findings. This connection between findings and the literature supports and clarifies why participants reported circumventing established operational service protocols by requesting escalation to an employee not situated at the one stop as previously discussed.

In addition to overall concerns with privacy, participants cited internalized fear of stigmatization by other students as causing trepidation when seeking support at the one stop. The
literature is replete with examples of postsecondary students reporting stigmatization by their peers (Burgstahler, 2015; Kendall, 2016; Kimball et al., 2017; Leake et al., 2014; Safer et al., 2020). This finding is important because it further reinforces the principles of universal design and supports action in favor of modifying postsecondary offices that serve students to be accessible to all in a way that guarantees students with disabilities can discretely receive enrollment support services.

The ability to balance an open, populated space with privacy for all participants demonstrates a constraint on the institution’s ability to manipulate the limited physical space designated for the one stop. The literature on how students with disabilities experience physical space (Lonabocker & Wager, 2007; Pearson & Samura, 2017) emphasized convenience and comfort when allowing interactions. As they presently exist, these spaces do not seem to achieve both for postsecondary students with disabilities. This finding is important because participants expressed dissatisfaction with one stop spaces serving their needs, which does not align with what the literature recommends.

Outside of the one stop's physical space, but situated within the physical building, additional structures and elements were repeatedly referenced by participants. Passageways, staircases, and elevators, for example, connect the one stop to additional student services within these shared spaces. Some of these spaces include the foundational departments that the one stops serve. Participants, as students with disabilities, lauded examples where they were able to traverse freely with no limitations. Conversely, participants also critiqued and called to question the actual accessibility of each. Conflicting perceptions suggest further inquiry, which will be addressed in a future section. Accessibility of restrooms and water filling stations for purposes beyond student comfort and into the realm of a necessity that must be accessible at all times.
emphasized how the physical structure of the one stop must be perceived as it relates to the entire building in which it is housed. The space cannot be relegated to where students first check in or seek service, and it became clear that there are opportunities for improvement to access. Limited literature on the location of these resources and their impact on students with disabilities presently exists.

**Location of One Stops**

Similar to the ways in which postsecondary students experienced their one stop as a physical structure, participants identified the ways its location factored into their ability to receive student service support. The way participants understood the location of these services in relation to other buildings and points of interest, including student-accessible parking lots within their campuses, allowed for a deeper understanding of how appropriately located these services are. Phillips et al. (2022) addressed the ability to physically navigate a campus for postsecondary students with disabilities as being a difficult experience. Previous studies did not address one stops; however, participants in this study supported related findings, including a desire to ensure the one stop is located strategically to meet the curricular and co-curricular needs of postsecondary students with disabilities (Wilke et al., 2019). Although accessibility issues for people with disabilities have been widely discussed in the literature (Aquino et al., 2017; Burgstahler, 2015; Fleming et al., 2017; Kimball et al., 2017), this appears to be an emerging topic for one stops.

The location of the one stop in relation to lecture halls and student housing underscored that participants attempt to strategically visit the one stop during convenient windows of time between class and other academic activities. However, these times may not be within the one stops hours of operation which becomes an inconvenience. Similarly, the distance between
student parking options and the one stop surfaced, impacting participants’ experience. Limited parking emerged as a concern for students who required assistance, and this lack of parking opportunities adversely prevented students from easily accessing the one stop. This aligns with the literature surrounding students’ success in locating relevant services and receiving necessary support (Cawthon & Cole, 2010).

One Stop Curricular and Co-curricular Impacts

Across all interviews, participants did not acknowledge that the one stop had a role in their abilities to succeed academically. Instead, they defined the need for enrollment-related tasks as adjacent to the main objective of performing well academically. The literature on postsecondary student support states that integrating social and academic cultures increases the integration of students into their curricular and co-curricular communities (Stanton, 2017). Prior studies (Daugherty & Tsai, 2017; LaShure et al., 2019) identified that one stops were not significant contributors to a student's ability to benefit greatly in either curricular or co-curricular ways. This study found their conclusions to align with the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities. This finding is important because it situates the one stop as a co-curricular experience previously not identified in the literature.

Participants greatly emphasized their relationship with their institution's disability resource center when considering co-curricular services contributing to their curricular success. As previously stated, participants associated their institution’s one stop with their disability resource center. In these instances, participants had incorrect understandings of the one stop. They shared their reliance on these departments, but the support was exclusively received outside the one stop. The following section will discuss research findings through the study’s theoretical framework, the social model of disability.
Social Model of Disability

I utilized the social model of disability as the theoretical framework of this dissertation because I wanted to utilize my education in Disability Studies and humanize this research. My expectation prior to the onset of this project was to share deeply personal dialogues with participants about their experiences as postsecondary students with disabilities. In particular, I expected how they perceived the differences between impairments and environmental factors to emerge. Thus, I did not directly incorporate model-specific questions into the interview guide that was used in the study. However, these deep discussions did not occur. Participants did not relay information or expand on their experiences through the explicit concepts of the medical or social models of disability. Instead, they responded to their individual experiences utilizing one stop services, regardless of their interpretation of how said services were impacted explicitly by their disabilities. Therefore, I cannot explain why this was the case. Additionally, I cannot clarify whether they are aware of the existence of either model. As expected, their lens was an amalgamation of their hands-on experience.

Participants represented a wide spectrum of varying disability identities, with some indicating periods in which they experienced an additional layer of accessibility needs due to temporary impairments. Framed by the social model of disability, this study sought an opportunity to contextualize and explore how this vast range of postsecondary students experienced the one stop as an environment that posed barriers, acting as disabling elements, as identified in the literature (Thornton & Downs, 2010). Participants regularly addressed how their impairments influenced their ability to receive support at the one stop, notably in adverse ways. Previous studies with student affairs professionals (Aquino et al., 2017; Lombardi & Lalor, 2017) found a lack of perceived support for postsecondary students with disabilities. Notably,
these studies did not address the experiences of students seeking centralized enrollment services. This finding is important because it identifies a new area in which this population of students is reporting a lack of support.

Participants expressed their disability identities during their interviews by discussing accommodations and individual barriers. Although some of the participants lacked a clear understanding of the functions of the one stop, they did carry a deeper understanding of the specific responsibilities of each department represented by the one stop. Nevertheless, as the literature demonstrated (Burgstahler, 2015; Kimball et al., 2017), experiences of student support tend to depend on the utilization of accommodations, which were not present in co-curricular spheres. This study evaluated co-curricular success through experiences outside spaces that required accommodations, specifically the one stop. This finding is important because it contributes to the literature on support service satisfaction for postsecondary students with disabilities, who repeatedly reported their lack of satisfaction when their individual disability identity needs were not met when receiving support at the one stop.

A reliance on accommodations as a means of seeking a level academic playing field defined participants’ experiences. They identified the ways in which their inabilities (e.g., to hear/see, physically navigate, comprehend, or retain information while at the one stop) informed their decisions in participating in varying service models when experiencing the one stop. In some instances, they referred to deviating outside the one stop to seek support from non-enrollment managing departments. This reliance on non-one stop services did not detract from their recommendations for change, including modifications to external and environmental factors. As previously shared, postsecondary students must demonstrate supportive documentation to receive accommodations (Burgstahler, 2015; Kimball et al., 2017). These
factors are consistent with the social model of disability but were not identified by the participants, possibly pointing to their lack of understanding of the social model.

In the previous section, I discussed findings within the context of this study’s research questions. I also established parallels between this study’s theoretical framework, the social model of disability, and the emergent theory centered on participants’ experiences and their institution’s one stop. In the following sections, I expand upon the utility of this study. I begin with a review of the limitations identified in this study.

**Limitations**

Several limitations impacted data collection in this study: (1) a broad definition of disability identity, (2) the timing of the study in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, and (3) the relevance of disability identities in reporting support. This study’s sample included individuals with a wide range of disabilities. In acknowledgment of this spectrum, where participants with physical, learning, cognitive, and psychological disabilities spoke directly to their experiences, several themes emerged within the scope of how postsecondary students with disabilities perceive one stops. Conceptually, disability is not monolithic. Although there are similarities, there are nuanced ways in which each group of students has unique barriers. This study’s design intended to have representation from participants with different disability identities. However, it remains possible that if recruitment had only included participants with one singular disability identity, the findings could have potentially varied.

Additionally, the data saturation levels throughout the findings may be inconsistent due to the sample size. Given the methodology utilized, this study’s sample size of 16 participants was appropriate (Charmaz, 2014). However, recruitment eligibility allowed for a wide array of experiences on behalf of participants. Several topics and experiences reoccurred across most
interviews, including those that did not speak to multiple participants. Had this study’s sample size increased to allow for more participants, identified themes may have varied.

Another limitation of this study is the consideration of COVID-19 and participant’s matriculation dates. Recruitment permitted any active students at institutions with a one stop to participate. However, due to the timing of this study, their experiences of the one stop existed within unique periods. Participants in this study fell into two larger categories in consideration of their original point of matriculation: those who began postsecondary education prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and those who began during or after. Student support experienced a sudden shift following Center for Disease Control recommendations, fundamentally altering the customer service models in all corners of postsecondary institutions. Virtual services for student support increased, greatly benefiting participants who experienced difficulties physically visiting the one stop. Following distance education mandates established in 2020, each preceding academic year saw postsecondary institutions increase efforts to relax virtual support to re-establish in-person assistance. How participants experienced their one stop before, during, and after COVID-19 may have impacted their overall interpretation and understanding of the support offered. Participants who experienced their one stop before the pandemic may have had different expectations had they attended and completed their programs before the 2019-2020 academic year.

This study’s interview questions guided participants to provide in-depth details about their experiences as postsecondary students with disabilities. However, the data did not articulate whether the challenges participants faced were related solely to their disability identities or if they were predicated upon the individual service support model presented at each site’s one stop. Although participants were forthcoming with speaking candidly about their experiences, few
responses emphasized a relationship between identified concerns with support and an individual disability identity or impairment. As this study’s interview questions did not explicitly set participants up to draw these parallels, it is unknown whether doing so would have resulted in drawing different conclusions. It is interesting to note that disability identities are one of multiple aspects of a person’s being. In some instances, participants referenced their lived experiences due to other factors, such as gender, sexuality, and race. However, this study did not address the intersectionality of each participant's identities. Based on the data of this study, there is a limited understanding of how participants’ other identities influenced or mediated their experiences at their institution’s one stops. The next section of this Chapter will explore the study's implications.

**Implications**

This study focused on how postsecondary students experienced their institution’s one stops. Findings identified that although participants utilized one stop services, their overall understanding of the department and their confidence in one stop employees demonstrated a lack of clearly articulated support. Participant responses captured the complicated relationship students foster with various University stakeholders and how they directly relate to how they experience the one stop. Additionally, participants emphasized the manners in which the physical structure and location of the one stop impact their abilities to receive support, sharing recommendations to fit their individual needs best. The contributions of participants in this study have implications for three groups of individuals: disability resource centers, one stop employees, and enrollment management professionals. Institutions interested in improving this experience may derive practical applications of these implications.
Implications for Disability Resource Centers

This study identified that postsecondary students with disabilities place heavy expectations on their institution’s disability resource center. Professionals within these departments may benefit from collected data in the following ways. To begin, it may be helpful for disability resource centers to educate students on where to go for enrollment services. For example, disability resource professionals can create and host training sessions in collaboration with their institution’s one stop to identify when it is appropriate to seek services from either department.

Learning opportunities from disability resource professionals go beyond simply teaching students how to identify where to receive what support. Participants continuously reported frustrations with their inability to receive adequate support that takes their disability needs into consideration. For this reason, disability resource center professionals have the opportunity to increase training opportunities for students to learn more about learning systems in general. This increased knowledge may potentially afford these students insight into how to utilize enrollment services more effectively and efficiently. Specifically, focused training may help empower students to identify patterns when they are not feeling supported by one stop personnel and respond appropriately to communicate their needs effectively. Additionally, disability resource centers are encouraged to work collaboratively with one stop employees and administrators to help identify and address the needs and concerns of postsecondary students with disabilities. This recommendation serves both the needs of students and provides professionals with continued opportunities for professional development.
Implications for One Stop Employees

The findings of this study include direct reflections on the customer service exchanges participants had with employees associated with a one stop, including student employees, generalists, and specialists. There appears to be a gap in the confidence students possess when receiving support from student employees and one stop generalists. The findings of this study suggest that student employees and one stop generalists may benefit from additional training to ensure both the accuracy of information conveyed and confidence in their ability to deliver this information. Universities may wish to consider incorporating professional development across all levels of employees related to their one stops to increase awareness of the challenges experienced by postsecondary students with disabilities. A consensus among participants regarding a lack of central awareness of how to appropriately identify and support students with disabilities emerged in the findings of this study. One stop employees are encouraged to increase their awareness of identifying situations where students would benefit from a relocation to a private space when meeting. Given the turnover of one stop student employees and generalists, these recommendations for additional training will need to be ongoing and incorporated into onboarding programming.

Implications for Enrollment Management Professionals

This study additionally identified implications for enrollment management professionals, including administrators in postsecondary education settings. The literature on enrollment management identified the centralization of services as an indicator of student support (Hornor, 2020; Smith & Harris, 2021). The findings of this study demonstrate a possible break in understanding on behalf of postsecondary students with disabilities due to a lack of clear communication of services between the departments that unite to form a one stop and students.
Therefore, it is suggested that enrollment management professionals assess the operational expectations and support provided to one stops. Opportunities to collect data regarding postsecondary student experiences and their expectations of the one stop might be useful to address the apparent gap identified through this study and related research (Seifert et al., 2017).

Privacy concerns when receiving in-person support arose across participant interviews. Enrollment management professionals interested in developing a new one stop, or those seeking to improve current models, may benefit from assessing how their students perceive privacy levels within one stop spaces. Furthermore, collaboration with facility planners knowledgeable on universal design principles may provide opportunities for enrollment management professionals to incorporate recommendations for improvements. Beyond developing a deeper understanding of this disconnect, enrollment management professionals may wish to actively participate with professional organizations dedicated to enrollment services actively, potentially seeking to solidify best practices for one stop employees and work towards a possible standardization of a universal one stop model.

With an understanding of the limitations of this study and the implications derived from the data, this Chapter continues with a series of proposals to further advance the purpose of this research. In the section that follows, recommendations for future research are discussed.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The relationship between one stops and postsecondary students remains under-researched. This study addressed the experiences of students with disabilities utilizing their institution’s one stop; however, this sample represents only one segment of the total population of postsecondary students. Emergent themes generated through this study provide the impetus for multiple future studies, including how students with disabilities experienced the structure,
location, and co-curricular benefits of a one stop. These opportunities to gain information fall into one main category: future research on one stops through multiple perspectives.

As indicated in Chapter 1, a paucity in the literature on one stops exists. Additional nuance may be gained through qualitative studies that seek to understand how various cross-campus constituents perceive and experience the one stop. These studies might include:

1. A study that compares students who have used both centralized and decentralized models of enrollment service support. This study could potentially increase the knowledge of the benefits of both models.

2. A study that includes both academic leaders and administrators together to identify potential changes to the current enrollment service model being used.

3. A grounded theory study regarding how one stop serving departments operate from a functional lens.

4. A study that includes the perspectives of one stops from students who do not identify as having a disability.

5. A novel study that seeks to measure melt rates of postsecondary students with disabilities at an institution with a one stop.

6. A study that focuses on the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities utilizing one stops at institutions of differing sizes and operations, including smaller private and larger public institutions.

Although this nascent study informs future qualitative studies, a diversified body of literature should be considered to increase the perspectives on one stops. For this reason, a final recommendation for additional scholarly studies on one stop includes quantitative research opportunities that address larger populations of students. As the body of knowledge grows, so
could the opportunities for institutions to adopt the one stop model. Studies addressing the five
topics above could also be applied to rigorous empirical, generalizable studies to fit industry
standards.

This dissertation concludes with a brief reminder of the purpose of this research study.
With the intent to inspire thoughtful change, I reflect upon the adversities faced by participants
and opine on what I believe is the call to action for professionals working with students with
disabilities.

**Conclusion and Call to Action**

Participants shared their direct experiences with their university’s one stop in this study.
It appears that although one stops provide some support to postsecondary students with
disabilities, they were not always utilized in a manner that was consistent with their purpose.
This inconsistency was rooted in general misunderstandings due to a lack of clear
communication that pushed postsecondary students with disabilities to seek support elsewhere.

At no fault of their own, twenty-first-century postsecondary students with disabilities are
situated at the intersection of unpredictable conflicts, including a once-in-a-lifetime global
pandemic, perpetual civil unrest, and invasive political animosity. Similar to their non-disabled
peers, they are expected to fall in line and conform to the path paved for them by those who may
or may not possess the tools necessary to create the safe spaces these students deserve. Safe
spaces do not always exist for them. Findings suggest that there are multiple opportunities for
growth and improvement. It is hoped this dissertation will stand as a reminder that it is the
responsibility of all members of a postsecondary community to identify how the needs of all
members are being met and work towards a reality where all parties co-exist in harmony.
Ultimately, the goal of this dissertation was twofold. The study’s primary goal was to contribute to the literature on one stops and postsecondary students. The results of this research project will hopefully grow into multiple opportunities for improving future students' experiences. The secondary goal, however, was an act of honoring participants and their stories in a meaningful way. I acknowledge that my positionality as an individual who is temporarily able-bodied situated me as an outsider within the community this study attempted to support. Further, I understand the delicate balance between speaking for and on behalf of this group, especially because this study focused on a particularly vulnerable subgroup: students.

In the end, I hope to have honored the experiences of postsecondary students with disabilities through a rigorous and thoughtful analysis of collected data. Although we may never cross paths again, the participants of this study and I will continue to coexist in a world where we continuously seek justice for those for whom justice is out of arm’s reach.
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Appendices

Appendix A

Chapman University IRB Approval

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IRB #: IRB-23-330

Title: The Experiences of Postsecondary Students with Disabilities Utilizing One Stop Student Services: A Grounded Theory Approach

Creation Date: 6-13-2023

End Date:

Status: Approved

Principal Investigator: Whitney McIntyre Miller

Review Board: Expedited

Sponsor:

Study History

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Key Study Contacts

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Appendix B

Introduction of Study/Site Entry Email

Greetings,

My name is Ivan Noe, and I am a PhD candidate at Chapman University pursuing a degree in Education. Over the last three years I have dedicated myself to studying the postsecondary experience of students with disabilities. Through immersing myself in research studies and projects completed by disabilities studies scholars, I’ve unlocked a world of literature that speaks to the lived experience of these students with direct representation from their own stories and anecdotes. I am eager to contribute to this field and am kindly requesting your assistance with this endeavor.

Presently, I am conducting a study on post-secondary students and their experiences utilizing one stop enrollment service centers. As I understand, your university/college operates a one stop, and I am delighted to hear that your students can receive support from generalists in a centralized location. As a higher education professional who spent several years working as a one stop generalist, I can say that I have seen many positive student experiences flourish from this ‘students first’ model. In the spirit of disability studies, I am hoping to learn more by directly interviewing students with disabilities regarding their experiences with one stop services.

Data collection will include information learned through a one-on-one, intensive, semi-structured interview. Each interview will last approximately 60-to-90 minutes. I may be reaching out to participants for a possible second interview throughout the study to explore new leads and concepts that arise as I begin to analyze the data.

Due to federal regulations, I am unable to request a report with contact information for students with disabilities that are registered at your college/university, so I am humbly requesting your assistance with passing along the attached message to all currently active students registered with your department.

If I can provide any clarification or additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me by email, inoe@chapman.edu, or by phone, 626-353-1044. I am happy to make arrangements to meet with you either in person or through Zoom. Thank you very much for your time and consideration, I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards,
Ivan Noe
Appendix C

Recruitment Email

Are you interested in having your voice heard and expressing your thoughts about one stop enrollment service centers, with a focus on providing support for students with disabilities in creative ways? If so, and if you meet the following qualifications, you may qualify to join an exciting new research project to discuss your university/one stop:

I am recruiting students who:

1. Are currently enrolled and regularly attending a college or university with a one stop.
2. Identify as having a disability, regardless of whether you are registered with your institution’s Disability Service Center.
3. Have utilized services at a one stop enrollment service center.
4. Able to meet for a 60-to-90 minute long, interview hosted either in person or virtually via Zoom.

This research study hopes to contribute to the greater understanding of both one stop enrollment service centers as well as the overall experience of postsecondary students with disabilities.

Have any questions or need further clarification? I’m happy to help! Please send me, Ivan, an email at inoe@chapman.edu. If you are interested in participating in this study, please respond within 10 days from receipt of this message.

I am appreciative of your time and are looking forward to hearing from you soon!
Appendix D

Demographic Questions

1. Your privacy is critical to my success and your comfort. Please share a pseudonym, or a fictional name, that you would like to use in lieu of your legal/chosen name.
2. Do you identify as a person with a disability or other chronic condition? How would you describe your disability or chronic condition? Please select all that apply.
   a. Attention deficit
   b. Autism
   c. Blind or visually impaired
   d. Deaf or hard of hearing
   e. Health-related disability
   f. Learning disability
   g. Mental health condition
   h. Mobility-related disability
   i. Speech-related disability
   j. Other (write in option included)
3. What is your age?
4. What is your current grade level?
   a. First year student
   b. Second year sophomore
   c. Third year junior
   d. Fourth year senior
   e. Graduate student
5. What gender best describes you?
6. Which of the following best describes you?
   a. Asexual
   b. Bisexual
   c. Gay or Lesbian
   d. Heterosexual or Straight
   e. Pansexual
   f. Queer
   g. Prefer to describe (write in option)
   h. Prefer not to disclose
7. Which of the following ethnic or racial categories best describes how you self-identity?
   a. African-American or Black
   b. Asian
   c. Hispanic/Latinx
   d. Middle Eastern/North African
   e. Native American/Alaska Native/First Nations
   f. Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian
   g. White
   h. Prefer not to answer
   i. Prefer to describe (write in answer)
Appendix E

Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study with me. I will spend the next 60-to-90 minutes asking you questions about your experiences with one stops. This interview is intended to help me better understand your perspective, and I am deeply grateful for your decision to be open and honest with me. During this time, you are free to pass on any questions or refuse to discuss anything that may cause you discomfort. Simply let me know, and I will be happy to pivot as needed. You may also end the interview at any time. Please take a few moments to review the following consent form. If you are comfortable and agree with outlined process, please sign and return to me. Once collected, we can get started.

1. To start, please share with me how you’re enjoying your time at [institution] so far?
2. I’m interested in learning about how you feel supported, specifically through your relationships with fellow students, faculty (your professors), and staff? In what ways do they support you as a student? Can you tell me more about your experience with these groups of people?
3. Can you describe what the transition from high school/community college was like for you?
4. I’m beginning to understand that experiences in secondary education settings, K-12 for example, can vary greatly from those in postsecondary settings. Can you tell me who assisted you with receiving support prior to enrolling at [institution]? In what ways, if any, did they help you navigate specific tasks and daily operations?
5. In your own words, what does the one stop enrollment service center do?
6. In your opinion, why do students visit the one stop?
7. How often have you received support by utilizing any of the services at [institution’s] one stop center?

8. What representative’s office has been the most helpful to you at the one stop center, and in what ways is the service they provide set apart from the service you’ve experienced from other represented offices?

9. Suppose your one stop disbanded, and all departments moved to different physical locations of your institution. How do you see this new model impacting your ability to navigate these services?

10. What are the one stops strengths in supporting you as a student?

11. What improvements would you recommend to support you as a student?

12. In what ways would you change your one stop – (consider asking about each of these individually if they haven’t touched on them) structurally? Staffing? Location? Services offered? Hours? What do you believe these changes accomplish?

13. Is there anything you were expecting to be asked that I did not touch on, and if so, what is the question, and what is your response to it?

14. Is there anything else I should know?

Thank you for your time today – I really value that you shared your time and experiences with me. Before we conclude, is there anything I didn’t cover today that you wish to discuss?

Great, thank you so much. I’ll be meeting with other students and hearing from them over the next few weeks. As I continue to complete my interviews, I may determine that there is a topic that you and I didn’t get a chance to explore, one that I believe may assist in truly getting to the bottom of my research project. In the event this is the case, I may reach out to you regarding a
follow up interview. Additionally, once all interviews are completed, I will reach out for your assistance in confirming the information that I collected is accurate and true to your experiences. Please be on the lookout for future correspondence and know that I am more than happy to answer any questions in the meantime. I am looking forward to hopefully speaking with you again, but in the meantime please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or items of discussion.
Appendix F
Coding Progression Example

The following excerpt from Barbie’s interview is included to demonstrate the data analysis process from transcript excerpt to final theme.

Transcript Excerpt

“No, and that actually really effectively gets at why my experience has been so, I guess piecemeal or distinct in working with them separately, because I'll get a little piece of information from someone that I'm like, “well, what does this mean in terms of dot dot dot,” and they're like, “well, you should try to ask so-and-so” and then it'll be like another chase down the name of someone who works in that department to figure out that piece of the puzzle. And then kind of on and on it goes until maybe a week later I have the full answer that I need.”

Line-by-Line and Initial Codes

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**Initial Codes and Focused Codes**

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