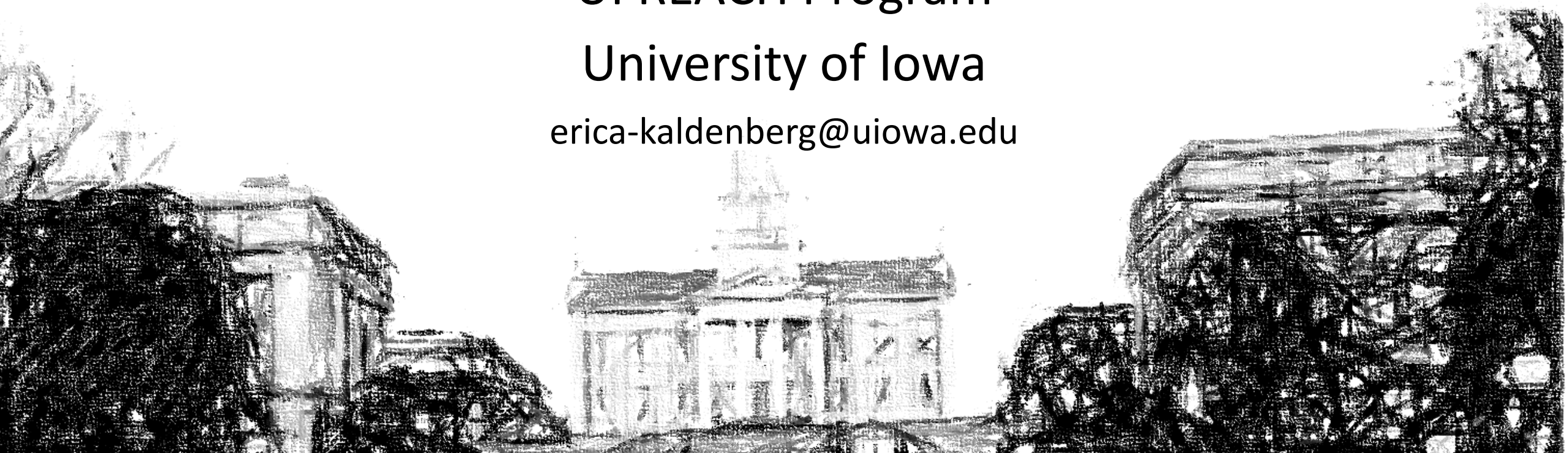# Student Empowerment through Student Voice

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UI REACH Program

University of Iowa

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University of Iowa—UI REACH program Realizing Education And Career Hopes

- Program development began in 2007.
- First graduating class from the 2-year certificate program 2010.
- 2010—UI REACH was 1 of 25 programs/proposals that received funding under the Higher Education Opportunity Act as part of the model transition programs for students with intellectual disability.
- To date we have:
  - 188 graduates
  - a post-UI REACH employment rate of 76%
  - a 4-year program with a 2-year option

UI REACH Promo Video

- https://youtu.be/6PXCBtk3hHQ

Program evaluation

Where are we currently at?

Where are we going?

What I have seen…

Nationally:

❖ A significant increase in the number of postsecondary education programs.

❖ Emerging research shows the positive impact of a college education for students.

❖ Continued increase in self-advocates and parent advocates propelling inclusive postsecondary education program development and program enhancement forward.

UI REACH's 12-year journey

- UI REACH has become an integral part of the University of Iowa campus community.

- While UI REACH has always had an on-campus residential component, over the years, we have significantly increased our campus partnerships and relationships, which has increased the amount and consistency of support for students in the UI REACH program.

UI REACH's 12-year journey

- **Meaningful/irreplaceable partnerships with the**:
  - Dean of Students Office
  - Office of Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator
  - Campus police
  - Housing

- **Organizational structure and staff alignment:**
  - Academics Coordinator, Student Life Coordinator, Career and Employment Coordinator
  - Student Support Coordinator (new as of fall 2019)
  - Alumni Support Professional (new as of fall 2019)
  - Year 3 and 4 enhancement specialist (new as of fall 2019)

UI REACH Highlight of Program Priorities

- Inclusive class offerings

- Inclusive student life experiences

- Employment support

- Year 3 and Year 4

- **Meaningful Credential**

What is program evaluation?

Adapted from the Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families

- Program evaluation is a systematic method for collecting, analyzing, and using **information** to answer basic questions about a program.

  - **Process evaluations** assesses whether an intervention or program model was implemented as planned, whether the intended target population was reached, and the major challenges and successful strategies associated with program implementation.

  - **Outcome evaluations** determine whether, and to what extent, the expected outcomes occur and whether these outcomes can be attributed to the program or program activities.

Resources: University of Iowa—Center for Evaluation and Assessment

Program Evaluation:

Adapted from the Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families

- **Reason #1**: A program evaluation can find out "what works" and "what does not work."
- **Reason #2**: A program evaluation can showcase the effectiveness of a program to the community and funders.
- **Reason #3**: A program evaluation can improve staff's frontline practice with participants.
- **Reason #4**: A program evaluation can increase a program's capacity to conduct a critical self- assessment and plan for the future.
- **Reason #5**: A program evaluation can build knowledge for the inclusive post-secondary, transition, and competitive integrated employment field.

WHERE WE ARE HEADING….

Working on defining our **short-term and long-term outcomes** (identifying best practices [standards review] & developing our strategic plan)

Next: Create a logic model

Then: Design the evaluation

Source. Milstein, R. L., & Wetterhall, S. F. (with CDC Evaluation Working Group Members). (1999). Framework for program evaluation in public health. *MMWR Recommendations and Reports, 48*(RR–11), 1–40.

Stakeholders

- People or organization invested in the **program/what you are doing.**

Identify & Engage Stakeholders

Stop and jot partners....

Programs — List as many stakeholder groups as you can?

Individuals—Write down what stakeholder group(s) you would or are currently a part of.

Once you have identified stakeholder groups, next you must engage them.

- **Participatory Research**
  - The Study of Participatory Research in Health Promotion, commissioned by the Royal Society of Canada, has published a set of guidelines for use by evaluators and funding agencies in assessing projects that aspire to be participatory.

  - The guidelines emphasize that traditional ways of conducting research in populations **must adapt to meet the educational, capacity-building, and policy expectations of more participatory approaches if the results of the research are to make a difference**.

Engaging your stakeholders

Think. Pair. Share.

As stakeholders, we are often asked to give feedback. Think of times in which you stopped/took the time to meaningfully respond. Think of times that you have decided not to respond. Compare and contrast these experiences and discuss your thoughts with the person(s) next to you. Then, we will discuss as a group.

Engaging your stakeholders:
People respond/give feedback <u>when prompted</u> when….

- ✓ **They feel their voice matters to the person/people/organization asking for feedback.**
    - ✓ **The stakeholder needs to feel respected, safe, comfortable, and listened to.**
- ✓ **They know that their feedback will be used and acted upon TRANSPARENTLY.**
- ✓ **They have an invested interest in the relationship to which they are providing feedback about.**
    - ✓ **Micro**
    - ✓ **Macro**

Engaging stakeholders is powerful.

Gather, synthesize, and analyze results of feedback from your stakeholders.

Engage Stakeholders

Use and Share Lessons Learned

Describe the Program

Standards
Utility
Feasibility
Propriety
Accuracy

Justify Conclusions
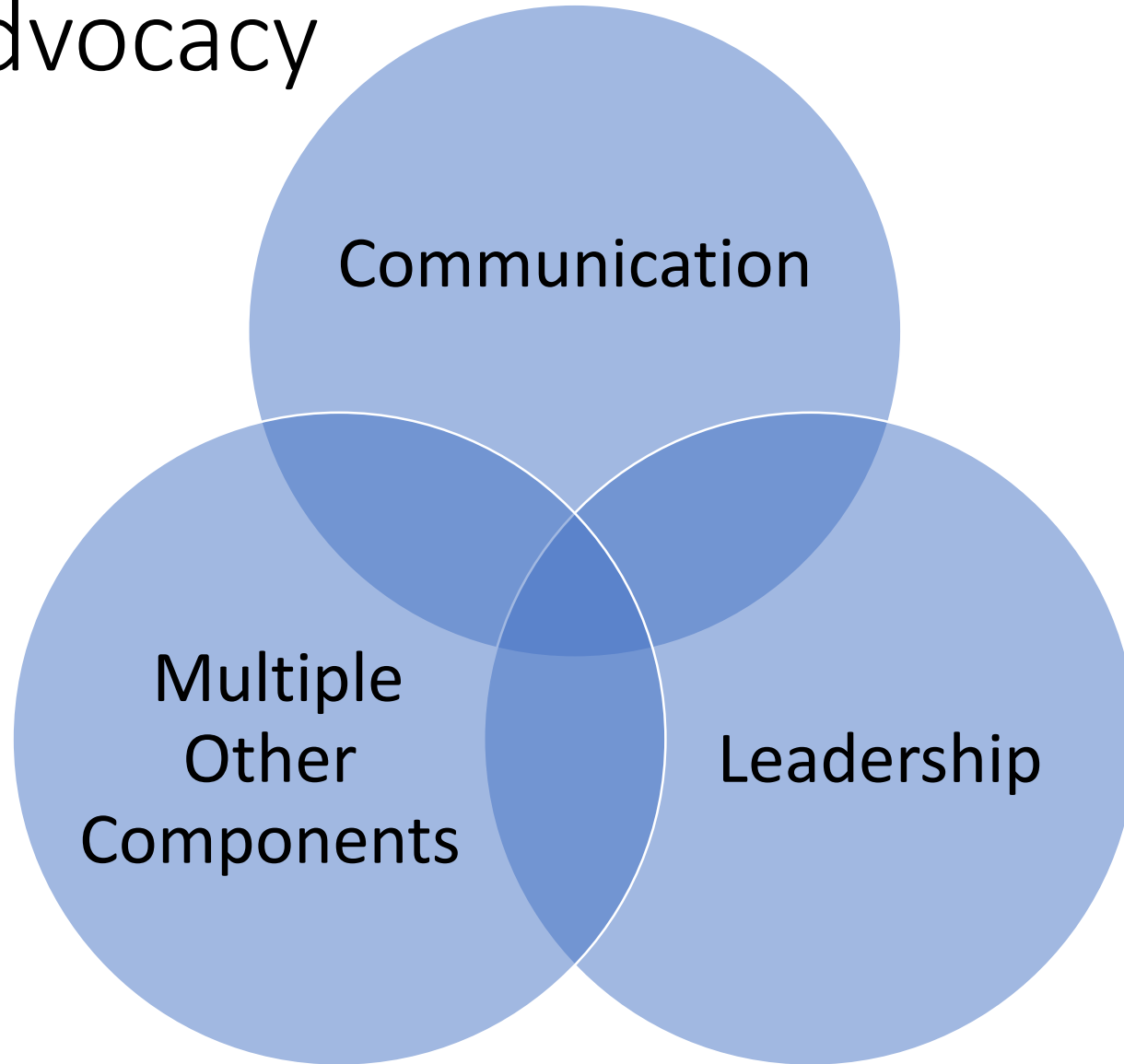
Focus Evaluation Design

Gather Credible Evidence

Source. Milstein, R. L., & Wetterhall, S. F. (with CDC Evaluation Working Group Members). (1999). Framework for program evaluation in public health. *MMWR Recommendations and Reports, 48*(RR–11), 1–40.

UI REACH Highlight of Program Priorities
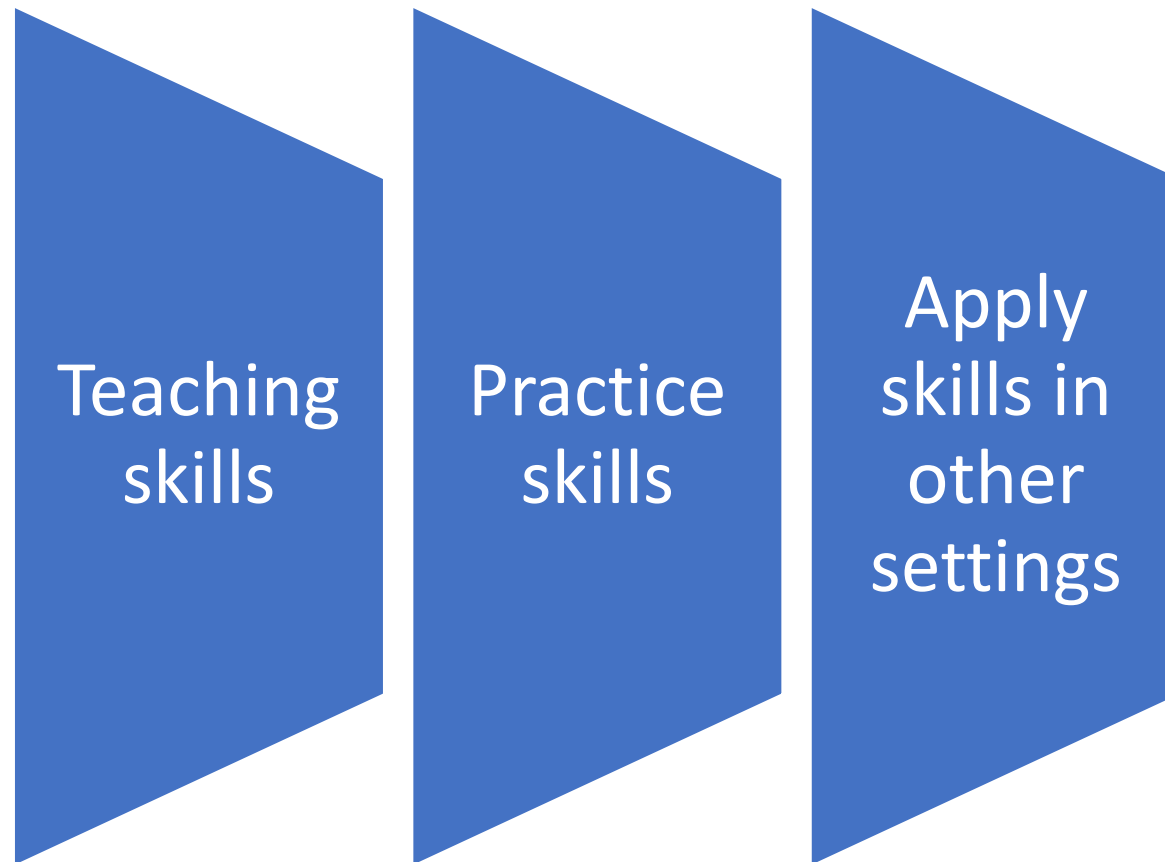
- **Student Self-Advocacy**

Self-Advocacy

Communication

Multiple Other Components

Leadership

Self-Advocacy and Engaging Stakeholders

College campuses provide many authentic settings to practice self-advocacy skills (communication and leadership) through advocacy.

Student Voice: Communication

- Practice prior to the setting
- In the setting
- Debrief after the initiated communication

★ explicitly teach
create opportunities to practice

Settings to practice communication

-Residential Halls (roommates, neighbors, RAs)

-On-campus

      -Classrooms (what courses, communication with professors)

      -Student organizations (interest/access, participation)

★ **program evaluation creates opportunities to practice**

Leadership Opportunities

- Access/support access to existing leadership opportunities
  - Student organizations

- Create leadership opportunities
  - UI REACH student council (also addresses communication needs and program evaluation feedback)