

**Mclver's Story:
Staying Power and Stability**

This series of stories aims to shed light on the transformative power of higher education credentials for students with intellectual disability. Through real-life examples, we explore how earning credentials in various fields has not only equipped these individuals with essential skills but has also paved the way for meaningful employment opportunities.

4-year university

Customer relations

South Carolina

After finishing college, Mclver and his family weren't sure what was next for him. They attended an open house for ClemsonLIFE at Clemson University where they learned that college offered a mix of employment, independent living, and traditional coursework. This experience confirmed their decision that college was the best option for Mclver, and he hasn't looked back.

The ClemsonLIFE program at Clemson University offers a collegiate experience that prepares young people with intellectual disability for competitive employment and independent living through a combination of academic coursework and career exploration. The program is designed for students who desire a postsecondary experience on a college campus. ClemsonLIFE incorporates functional academics, independent living, employment, and social skills in a public university setting with the goal of producing self-sufficient young adults.

Mclver graduated from ClemsonLIFE in 2014 with a certificate of postsecondary education after completing three years of programming. Mclver completed the 2-year Basic Program while living on campus, followed by a year of in the Advanced Program where he lived off campus in his own apartment. During his years in the program, Mclver took around 14-15 credit hours focusing on traditional university coursework, functional academics, and employment. Mclver also participated in a variety of employment internships, working in maintenance, food service, and groundskeeping. Mclver shared that while he learned many job-specific skills during his employment placements, he felt that the experiences helped him most with customer service and leadership skills, which he still uses to this day.

Mclver has been in his current position as a warehouse manager for an event rental company for over eight years. He is a full-time employee and receives full benefits. He has continued to build upon his leadership skills with his current work team by being a good team member and getting along with his coworkers. His strong work ethic and job performance earned him a promotion, and he is responsible for inventorying all equipment as it is checked in and out of the facility. He also lives independently in his own apartment and has a girlfriend who he loves spending time with. When asked if college was worth it, he quickly states that it was difficult, but he learned a lot of important life skills that have enabled him to reach his full potential.



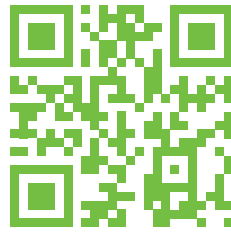
Mclver shared that he learned many job-specific skills during his employment placements, but the customer service and leadership skills are ones he still uses to this day.

Why are postsecondary education credentials important?

Earning a postsecondary education credential creates a better starting point for students with intellectual disability entering the job market and adult life. Those who access higher education are more likely to be employed, earn higher wages, and have stronger social and professional networks. There are more than 350 colleges and universities in the US with various credential options providing college students with intellectual disability opportunities for better employment outcomes and more successful adult lives.



Read more credential
pathway stories



Learn more about inclusive
postsecondary education



See the data on employment
outcomes of students with
intellectual disability



Visit: www.thinkcollege.net

Follow: [@thinkcollegeICI](https://www.instagram.com/thinkcollegeICI)

Contact: thinkcollegeTA@umb.edu

Subscribe: thinkcollege.net/subscribe



The Inclusive Higher Education Network is a national technical assistance and dissemination center, funded by the US Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education. The Network is tasked with increasing regional and state capacity, building awareness, creating strategic partnerships, and supporting expansion and improvement of higher education for students with intellectual disability through resource and training development.

Learn more about TCN at thinkcollege.net/projects/tcn

This is a publication of the Think College Inclusive Higher Education Network at the Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston, funded by the Office of Postsecondary Education (Grant No. P407C210001). The opinions contained in this document are those of the grantee and do not necessarily reflect those of the funders.

Recommended citation: Inclusive Higher Education Network. (2025). McIver's Story: Staying Power and Stability. Think College Stories: Credential Pathways. Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston.