

**Washington State University**

**College of Education**

**Kelsey MacDonald**

**Will defend the dissertation on**

**Date: December 12, 2022**

**Time: 11:30 A.M.**

**Zoom by request to [gradstudies@wsu.edu](mailto:gradstudies@wsu.edu)**

*Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend*

**Power Structures in an Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Program for Students with I/DD: A Critical Case Study of Stakeholders' Perspectives**

Co-Chairs: Holly Whittenburg and Brenda Barrio

A qualitative case study approach was employed to explore the perspectives of stakeholders affiliated with an inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) program for students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) in the Pacific Northwest United States. Utilizing Artiles' (2009) cultural-historical paradigm, three research questions were developed to gain insight about the covert power structures that impact stakeholders, in addition to benefits and obstacles. Nine total participants were interviewed, and four participants were IPSE program students with I/DD. One participant was an IPSE program student graduate who had become a staff member of the IPSE program. The other four participants were graduate staff, full-time staff, and leadership. Interview data was transcribed, coded, and then categorized into three themes. The three themes that emerged from the data included a) impacting system structures, b) cultivating growth in IPSE, and c) interfering structures to IPSE. Findings from this study indicate that stakeholders believe inconsistencies in educational policies along with the pressure to grow the program quickly and successfully, are impacting system structures. As for cultivating growth in IPSE, there are different reported benefits for IPSE students versus IPSE staff and leadership. For IPSE program students, benefits primarily aligned with the independent living outcome goals of the TPSID grant. For IPSE program staff and leadership, benefits are a sense of community, a network of relationships, support, along with professional growth. Main obstacles that all stakeholders faced as part of the interfering structures to IPSE theme included institutional barriers, financial barriers, and professors as barriers. This case study provides educators and researchers with the opportunity to learn directly from the students with I/DD and key stakeholders about their perceptions and the ways that the IPSE program has impacted them. From these findings, future research directions are discussed.