The Center for the Research and Study of Disability, Education, and Culture

**The Center for the Research and Study of Disability, Education, and Culture (CRSDEC)** is a regional academic base for quality research, practical instructional applications and community outreach. It serves as a wellspring for our teacher candidates who choose to obtain special education certification along with regular teacher certification.

The Center provides opportunities for both students and faculty to explore the field, and encourages community awareness of historical, cultural, and political/legal dimensions of disability. CRSDEC partnerships include Variety St. Louis and its partner agencies (e.g., St. Louis ARC, Epworth Children and Family Services, and Teen Advocates for Sexual Health), St. Louis Public Schools, and the Special School District of St. Louis County.

CRSDEC student clinical experiences, held in schools and organizations, encourage awareness and advocacy. Our philosophy embraces the College’s Special Education program that champions evidence-based best practices in courses that prepare educators for effective team problem-solving and decision making. For example, CRSDEC-supported educator candidates assist Greater St. Louis schools and Variety’s Summer Adventure Camp programs to develop learning experiences that include children of all abilities, and provide helpful strategies and support for the participating children. As our students gain experiences in schools and summer programs, the Center guides their intensive research initiatives that promote self-directed, lifelong learning.

**Center Resources**

The CRSDEC resources include access to journals and an extensive library for studying disability, available to students, faculty, and the general public. Events have featured nationally recognized speakers on topics, such as the power of advocacy, regional symposia for educators on perceptions and attitudes, and widely-attended summits on the challenges of educating children with Autism.

An excellent resource for educators, students, and parents is the Center’s online Davidson Resource Directory for St. Louis Area and statewide students with disabilities and their families – an updated, current database of services, agencies, and government programs. Searchable by type of services needed (such as summer camps, day care, and therapy) and also by disability, users can match services needed to specific disabilities. For instance, parents of a child who is autistic can search for regional camps that provide experiences that include children with Autism Spectrum Disorders.