



Weingarten Center
Academic Support and Disability Services

*21st Annual Weingarten Center Disability Symposium
Being a Leader in Disability Services, Being a Leader in Higher Education*

March 10, 2023

Location: Houston Hall, 3417 Spruce Street

Program Schedule

Deep appreciation to Mary and Joseph Landy and their generous support of the Symposium.

7: 15am-8:15am	Registration Check-in/Breakfast in Houston Hall
8:15am-8:30am	Welcome Remarks: Sharon E. Smith, Associate Vice Provost, University Life, University of Pennsylvania (Location: Bodek Lounge)
8:30am-9:45am	Plenary Speaker: Adam Meyer Location: Bodek Lounge
9:45am-10:00am	Transition time to First Workshop
10:00am-11:00am	Workshop #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-conceptualizing Disability in Higher Education (Location: Bodek Lounge)• Making an Impact (Location: Hall of Flags)• School Attendance (Location: Class of 1949)
11:00am-11:15am	Transition time to Second Workshop

- 11:15am-12:15pm** **Workshop #2**
- **Fieldwork in Disabilities Studies (Location: Hall of Flags)**
 - **Forging Opportunities for Neurodiverse Students (Location: Bodek Lounge)**
- 12:15pm-1:00pm** **Lunch/Conversation (Houston Hall)**
- 1:00pm-2:15pm** **Plenary Speaker: Jennifer Smith**
Location: Bodek Lounge
- 2:15pm-2:30pm** **Transition to Third Workshop**
- 2:30pm-3:30pm** **Workshop #3**
- **Problem-Solving at the Intersection of Academic Services (Location: Hall of Flags)**
 - **Leading from within the Pack (Location: Class of 1949)**
 - **Breaking Down Silos to Build up our Community Events (Location: Bodek Lounge)**
- 3:30pm-4:15pm** **Conversation Time/Farewells**

Presentation Descriptions and Speaker Biographies

Morning Plenary: Reaching our Leadership Potential

When we think about what constitutes leadership, one of the biggest misconceptions that exist is that leadership is directly tied to a position and its title. All of us are capable of being leaders no matter the official role that we have within our work environment. Leadership is about making a difference for the common good of others. We all can make this difference with intentionality based on how we approach situations. This session will explore the goal of leadership, strategies for effective leadership, and insights into how we can provide leadership within our spheres of influence. For our work in disability offices in higher education, our pursuit of seamless access and inclusion for disabled individuals requires effective collaboration with our campus stakeholders that can only be accomplished through influential leadership.

Biography

Adam Meyer is the Director of the Student Accessibility Services at the University of Central Florida. He has past experiences at Eastern Michigan University and at Saint Louis University while serving in this field since 2004. Adam was previously part of a national US Department of Education grant that explored ways in which concepts of social justice could be more regularly and routinely incorporated into the operations of the disability services office. Adam has presented at 12 AHEAD conferences and multiple other AHEAD and AHEAD affiliate venues on rethinking documentation, social model of disability and office implementation, effective initial student interviews and interactive process facilitation, disability language and various leadership and influence strategies for disability office personnel. Adam served on the Association for Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) Board of Directors, now serves on the AHEAD external review team for campus program evaluations, and also does consulting and presentations with other disability offices and their campuses.

Afternoon Plenary: Start with Passion: A Leader's Secret Sauce to Success

Research indicates that approximately 84% of people are passionate about at least one activity. Passion drives leaders to participate in highly valued and meaningful activities they enjoy. As someone who works in Disability Services, you desire to serve and ensure students have a fair and equitable learning experience. But every day does not go as planned, and you cannot predict what will happen next. A passionate leader is inspired to take action and achieve desired outcomes regardless of the situation. This dedication takes time, energy, persistence, patience, and perseverance and can sometimes lead to burnout or feeling drained. When a

Leader Starts with Passion, they more consistently have high confidence, influence with a positive impact, exude leadership presence, and become inspired to reach their full potential. During this highly engaging and informative talk, attendees will learn the following:

- How to identify if they have passion for their work, and what causes the waning of one's passion
- Why passion plays a crucial role in one's confidence and ability to address student requests effectively
- How to navigate the Passionate Leader Continuum™ to have sustained success.

Start with Passion: A Leader's Secret Sauce to Success will help attendees reignite their fire within and invite them to take action when they leave the conference.

Biography

Jennifer L. Smith, CEO of Growth Potential Consulting and founder of the Passionate Leader Institute®, is a dynamic business leader helping organizations create sustainable results. Her combined Finance, Six Sigma Quality, and Organization Development experience allow her to approach business challenges from a diverse perspective. And this combination influences her ability to set strategies that align talent to specific business needs and cultivates inclusive, high-performance company cultures that deliver on organizational goals.

With more than 25 years of leadership experience, Jennifer has helped thousands of leaders across five continents and fourteen industries. Using passion as a key lever for success, she inspires leaders to have more significant influence, lead high-performing teams, and flourish when promoted to positions with greater responsibility.

Jennifer's credentials include a Master's in Organizational Development & Human Resources from Johns Hopkins Carey Business School and a Bachelor's in Accounting at Grambling State University. She is a Certified Professional Coach credentialed by the International Coach Federation, allowing her to have a strategic partnership with The University of Pennsylvania along with The Wharton School. Jennifer is a Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Alumna and TEDx Speaker who enjoys mentoring college-age and early career leaders.

Workshop #1 Sessions

Re-conceptualizing Disability in Higher Education using a Social Model Lens for Equity and Success

Presenters: Dee Singley, PhD, and Joanna Timmerman, M.A., Ursinus College

Long before the COVID pandemic hit higher education, disability professionals experienced significant increases in the number of students requesting accommodations and supports for disabilities. Specifically, students with diagnoses such as depression, anxiety, Crohn's disease, and irritable bowel syndrome increased, in some cases with higher numbers over the more typically seen diagnoses in higher education such as ADHD and learning disabilities. Post-Covid, numbers continue to increase at exponential rates. While numbers for disability offices continues to increase, social prejudices and inaccessible environments continue to halt academic and social success of students navigating impacts from a disability.

While the medical model of disability has informed the practices and processes of receiving disability accommodations in higher education, it has also created harmful consequences, including individuals with disabilities report feeling socially excluded, undervalued, and treated as if they are completely incapacitated or objects of pity. The social model of disability provides a framework in which disability professionals work to ensure equal access for students with disabilities, especially those students intersecting with other marginalized identities. At Ursinus College, the Office of Disability and Access team intentionally teaches through the lens of a social model to promote understanding of disability. We have adapted the language within documentation guidelines, adapted processes and procedures, and work with faculty and staff to promote understanding of proactive, equitable strategies so that all students have access to their learning environments. This presentation will provide a framework for the social model of disability in higher education.

Biographies

Dee Singley (she/they) currently services as the Director of Disability and Access at Ursinus College. Dee has their PhD in Special Education from Lehigh University and has been working in disability and access services in multiple liberal arts colleges since 2006. Dee uses the social model lens of understanding disability and access to inform communities about disability and access. While much of Dee's work focuses on facilitating accommodations for students under the American with Disabilities Amendments Act, Dee works strategically and intentionally to provide resources, education, and support for all stakeholders to think proactively about infusing equitable practices and design across the

college environment. Outside of her work in disability and access, Dee loves being a parent and spouse, and when the opportunity arises, loves being in the classroom to teach courses to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Joanna Timmerman (she/her) currently serves as the Assistant Director of Disability and Access at Ursinus College, her alma mater. Since graduating with her master's in education with a concentration in higher education from Villanova University, Joanna has worked in various areas of higher education, including institutional research, student engagement, and disability and access. Joanna's passion is providing students with equitable opportunities for success, educating campus constituents about inclusive practices and universal design, and creating a space for students to feel affirmed, valued, and empowered. Her specific research interests include emotional support animal policies, deconstructing ableist language patterns, and intersectional educational programming. Outside of work, Joanna enjoys spending time with her dog Maxie, crafting, and eating ice cream.

Making an Impact: Using Shared Governance to Promote Neuro-Inclusion

Presenters: John Woodruff, M.S., and Chiara Latimer, MFT, Rowan University

The opening of Rowan University's Center for Neurodiversity in 2021 was the result of a shared vision of numerous stakeholders from the Rowan community to address the needs of neurodivergent students, faculty, and staff. The development of the Center involved leaders from Accessibility Services, Autism PATH, and the Neurodiversity Taskforce consisting of faculty and student voices. Our presentation will follow the timeline and campus initiatives over the years involving inclusive leadership and shared governance that created the framework for a Center for Neurodiversity. These initiatives were focused on supporting neurodivergent students in the introduction to college and the transition to higher education. For example, the Young Profs Summer Camp, College Prep Transition Conference, Autism PATH Program, and the Inclusive Pedagogy and Practices certificate. Our presentation will demonstrate how the four principles of shared governance (Partnership, Equity, Accountability, and Ownership) have impacted Rowan University's efforts to create a neuro-inclusive campus and workplace for students, faculty, and staff. Attendees will learn about the importance of inclusive leadership and outreach to neurodivergent members of the campus community to participate in the decision-making process that led to a Center for Neurodiversity at Rowan University. Attendees will be able to identify campus partners and collaborators to build shared governance on their campuses to promote inclusion. In addition, attendees will learn how to implement changes embracing neurodiversity in their individual practice and/or department.

Biographies

John Woodruff, MS Health Education, is Director of the Accessibility Services and Co-Director of the Center for Neurodiversity at Rowan University. He coordinates campus services for students with disabilities and manages transitions for students entering college. John holds an MS in Health Education from St. Joseph's University and a BS in Business Administration from St. Francis University (Loretto, Pennsylvania). Woodruff is co-author of two books including *Creating Inclusive Library Environments*; and *College Success for Students on the Autism Spectrum: A Neurodiversity Perspective*. John's professional career reflects over 39 years of education, training, and administration of programs for persons with disabilities.

Chiara Latimer, MFT, is the Co-Director of the Center for Neurodiversity and Program Coordinator of the Autism PATH Program at Rowan University. She has dedicated 10 years of her career to supporting neurodiverse students in clinical and educational settings. She is also an adjunct professor with a focus on career readiness and educating employers, Chiara continues to promote the importance of empathy and inclusion in higher education and the workplace.

School Attendance: The Dangers of Overemphasizing Its Importance and Possible Methods to Include Chronically Ill Students

Presenter: Ametrine Rei-Skoff, Seton Hill University

Leadership requires a unique combination of being willing to do the things you are asking of another person and delegating responsibilities. It also requires implementing new and innovative ideas and programs to support students. Change is difficult for many people, and you will receive pushback. It is imperative to listen to the pushback because there may be barriers you have not realized. In education, as with many jobs and other aspects of life, attendance is key. For many with a chronic illness, attendance can be the hardest part of life. Imagine being a student at a university who can read the chapters, write the papers, have thoughtful and meaningful contributions to class, and score well on tests, but being unable to drive yourself or sit through a two-hour lecture. Prior to COVID-19, cameras in a classroom for a live feed would have been a logistical and legal nightmare, but when it had to happen because nearly everyone was affected, it happened. We must do the same for students with chronic illness, whether visible or invisible. It will require losing the mindset of "that's how we have always done it." If anything positive came out of the pandemic, it was the collective and collaborative problem solving that happened worldwide. Many of those accommodations and alterations could change a student's life.

Biography

Ametrine Elizabeth Rei-Skoff is a doctoral student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she is focusing her studies in the Curriculum and Instruction Program on the social and emotional aspects of students with chronic illnesses and high absenteeism rates. She works as Coordinator for Disability Services and as an Academic Counselor for Trio Student Support Services at Seton Hill University in Greensburg, PA. Ametrine has 16 years' experience in the Pennsylvania public school system as a guidance counselor and teacher prior to joining the staff at Seton Hill University.

Workshop #2

Fieldwork in Disabilities Studies: Exploring a Communal Care Model
Presenter: Steve Scaduto, Penn Libraries, Learning Enrichment,
University of Pennsylvania

In the fall of 2022, I began my fieldwork to complete my Disabilities Studies Certificate at Temple University. Working in higher education, I often wondered where the students came from before I began working with them as young adults – How have their childhood experiences informed their current paths, especially around their thoughts, and how they can be empowered to advocate for themselves? And now helping my son navigate his ADHD in a way that works for him, I want to create an environment that empowers him in age-appropriate ways. My interests took me to a nonprofit that supports young people through multi-disciplinary art and conversations. My goal was to explore a community that aims to have students access their identities and see how disability may be a part of the conversation.

A week before I was supposed to begin my work, my mother died. With her death, I have been thinking a lot about time and how individuals in a community may perceive it differently. How does one's body affect that perception? My mother had dementia; I wonder how she experienced time throughout her experience. Did it seem elongated or was it something else? Was her relationship with pain a factor in this perception? Am I viewing this through some sort of ableist norm? As I prepared to work with artist-educators, I began to wonder how the students they worked with were able to have space in regard to their relationship to time. This presentation aims to look at one story on how conversations and work around disability can lead a community to further strive in creating a space where students feel welcomed and empowered.

Biography

Steve Scaduto currently works at Penn Libraries, where he plays a vital role in aiding students in exploring their interests through vision planning, community building, and play with a student affairs approach. Throughout his 20 years in higher education, Steve has held several positions in student affairs that had him focus on creating vision planning initiatives and learning labs for students to develop personal, professional, and program management skills. In addition, he has worked in academic affairs where he has provided academic support to undergraduate and graduate students – from writing centers, peer tutoring, bridge programs, first-year writing, and accommodation coordination. Recently, Steve completed his Disabilities Studies Certificate at Temple University that he hopes will help him continue to explore how we can create welcoming communities.

Forging Opportunities for Neurodiverse Students in the Writing Classroom

Presenters: Amanda DiLodovico, Lecturer in Critical Writing, University of Pennsylvania; Val Ross, Director, Marks Family Center for Excellence in Writing; University of Pennsylvania; Jon Argaman, Lecturer in Critical Writing, University of Pennsylvania

In keeping with current research and advocacy, the Critical Writing Program at the University of Pennsylvania has been transforming from what we once called a “disability-centered writing program” (Ross, Browning 2019) to one continuously poised to identify and address impairments, broadly conceived: not just impairments often labeled disabilities, but also those that arise from the social, academic, technological, or built environments. We have in recent years focused intensively on addressing impairments related to neurodiverse students, finding that most are social and academic: the “ugly and unwelcoming attitude of others...the strict insistence on standardized modes and levels of functioning; the impediments to access” (Goering 2015).

We are deepening our understanding of such impairments by working collaboratively with writing faculty to design processes and curricula that embrace pedagogical, social, and technological ways to facilitate inclusion and academic success for all students. We have learned, in short, that norms—social and academic—can be disabling and counterproductive. This panel will discuss how we are leading an effort to identify, analyze, and, where possible, transform aspects of our curriculum and approach to teaching, so that we can expand our sense of “universal design” to include neurodiversity, an as yet rather underexplored aspect of inclusivity in higher education, despite that neurodivergent students are likely the largest minority population in our colleges and universities (estimated 11 to 30% of all college

students). We will discuss our findings and also how we have found ways to address academic and social impairments that serve as unnecessary and dispiriting barriers to the success of students with, for example, slower processing speed, forgetfulness, social anxiety, or reading difficulties. Our aim—our ideal—is to create classes that are so inclusive that neurodiverse students will not require diagnoses or special accommodations because such impairments have already been anticipated and addressed in our curriculum, our teaching practices, our technology, and our social environment.

Biographies

Amanda DiLodovico is a Lecturer in Critical Writing in the Critical Writing Program at the University of Pennsylvania. Her teaching practice focuses on neurodiversity in the writing classroom and the creation of equitable learning outcomes for all undergraduate writers. She currently serves as faculty co-advisor of the student organization, Advocates for NeuroDiversity. Since coming to Penn in 2018, she has created disability-centered pedagogical strategies for the writing classroom that stem from prior research in Disability Studies, as well as Dance Studies and dance pedagogy. Her other research interests include crip theory in the classroom and embodied writing practices.

Valerie Ross is the Senior (and founding) Director of the Marks Family Center for Excellence in Writing, including the Critical Writing Program, which provides writing courses to all Penn undergraduates, and the Marks Family Writing Center, which provides writing support to Penn students. The Marks Family Center for Excellence has a strong commitment to inclusionary teaching and research and strives to be a disability-centered organization. See, for example, Ross and Browning (2018), "[From Difference to Differance: Developing a Disability-Centered Program](#)," Along with a focus on disabilities, Ross's other research interests include fairness in writing assessment, writing in the disciplines, and theories of organizational change.

Jon Argaman is a Lecturer in Critical Writing whose research and teaching practice focuses on neurodiversity in college-level writing. Since joining the Critical Writing Program in 2014, he has worked to build tools and strategies for creating more accessible, differentiated classroom environments for a neurologically diverse range of students. He currently serves as faculty co-advisor of the student organization, Advocates for NeuroDiversity. His other research interests include strategies for universal design, and the intersection of executive function and the writing process.

Workshop #3 Sessions

Problem-Solving at the Intersection of Academic Services and Disability Support at an Art and Design College

Presenters: Jenna Bradley, Moore College of Art and Design; Claudine Thomas, Moore College of Art and Design

Over the past two years while working with students and instructors at Moore College of Art and Design, we in Academic Services have heard both parties calling for increased supports for students with disabilities. Professors reported increased anxiety among students in classroom settings and, as a result, that professors were hesitant to engage students in class for fear of inciting an emotional outburst. Many students similarly reported feeling anxious in classroom settings and, as a result, asked instead to complete alternate assignments, to pre-record presentations, and to not be called on in discussions. Students especially seemed to dread situations that required them to speak in class. This aversion to speaking posed a particular challenge at an art and design school, where the primary method of assessment is group critiques rather than tests or papers. Academic Services was well positioned to investigate and address the reported problem of needing increased support for students with disabilities.

Since Moore College of Art and Design is a small institution with only about 400 students, we in Academic Services wear many hats, including those of disability services provider and accommodations coordinator. Our position at the intersection of academic support and disability services provides a unique and holistic perspective on students' struggles and needs. In this case, we were able to see the ways that students' disability-related issues were intertwined with their classroom behavior and academic performance. In this presentation we will discuss the strategies, including student surveys and focus groups, that we utilized to investigate the reported problems and what we learned from that data. We will go on to share how we, as leaders, continue to apply that knowledge to address the needs of our students and remove the stigma of having a disability by amplifying the voices of students with disabilities, advocating on their behalf to higher administrators, and educating faculty and staff. Based on our ongoing experiences, we will suggest ways to implement similar strategies at other schools.

Biographies

Claudine Thomas is a Philadelphia native who has spent both her personal and professional career advocating for education, the arts, and social justice issues. She studied Psychology at Pennsylvania State University then received her Master's degree in Education

from the University of Pennsylvania and went on to work with the American Red Cross as Director of Youth Services. Currently, Claudine serves as the Chief Academic Officer/Academic Dean for Moore College of Art & Design, helping to establish strategic initiatives that includes leadership, academic excellence and engagement. She also serves as the co-chair for the Association of Institutions and Colleges of Art and Design Diversity, Inclusion and Access Taskforce. Most recently, Claudine received her MFA in Creative Writing from Arcadia University.

Jenna Bradley has a Bachelors degree in English from the University of Louisville and a Master's degree in English specializing in writing studies from the University of Delaware. She worked as an SAT/ACT tutor and teacher for Kaplan Test Prep before moving from Kentucky to Delaware for graduate school. While teaching first year writing classes and serving as the Assistant Director of the Writing Center at UD, she discovered a passion for providing academic and disability-related student support at the college level. Currently, she serves as the Academic Services Coordinator at Moore College of Art & Design, where she runs the academic support programs including the Bridge-to-Success program, peer tutoring, and academic accommodations.

Leading from within the pack: applying lessons learned from living with disabilities to the fight for disability equity

Presenter: Geneva Harline

Leadership does not always require a formal leadership role and can be just as or more effective with regards to stigma mitigation from a support role. In fact, stigma is often most effectively countered in thoughtful daily interactions rather than just policy interventions, and as such, it is a process that requires self-awareness and intentional actions. Living with a disability is similar to this in that it also requires thinking through seemingly common interactions on a more intentional level. I have found that many of the skills required to navigate the world with a disability have transferred to my work to increase accessibility and mitigate the stigma of mental illness and neurodiversity. In this presentation, I will share 4-5 lessons I have learned from living with invisible disabilities and show how they can be applied to leadership in the fight for disability equity from an academic support role.

Biography

Geneva Harline is an Instructional Design Support Specialist for the IDEA Courseware Team at Wharton Computing. Geneva's research stems from the intersection of institutional, societal, and individual needs with a heavy focus on mental and social wellbeing, especially related to trauma-aware and neurodiverse pedagogy. They are deeply interested in combining pedagogy, technology, community/team dynamics, and stigma mitigation theories into course design. Geneva holds an M.A. in Folklore from Utah State University and a B.A. in Anthropology from Weber State University.

Breaking Down Silos to Build Up our Community Events

Presenters: Kate Keppen, Ursinus College; Dee Singley, Ursinus College; Joanna Timmerman, Ursinus College

Leadership at Ursinus College is about collaboration and innovation. Time and again, members of the Ursinus Community have demonstrated that “it can be done” together. Despite the high collaborative efforts, the deconstruction of organizational silos that exist within higher education proves to be a challenge in finding strategic, equitable solutions to campus concerns. There is necessary and innovative work happening in offices and departments around campus, but we know that it is at the intersection of these silos that ideation can lead to innovative problem solving.

The Office of Sustainability and the Office of Disability and Access at Ursinus College are offices that are built upon the premises of service. Both offices serve the Ursinus community through education, opportunities for personal growth, and empowerment. In addition, both offices are often relied upon as a trusted source of best practices in each of their areas of specialization. In 2022, the two offices collaborated on creating a best practice program for sustainable and accessible college events. This voluntary program serves as a foundational checklist for any member or group of the Ursinus College community who hosts events. While the study of the intersection of sustainability and accessibility is nothing new (Gossett, Mirza, Barnds & Feidt, 2009), it can often feel daunting to implement on a practical level (Miethlich, 2019). The leadership and collaboration of these offices attempts to bring these large-scale concerns back to their most basic questions (Imrie & Thomas, 2008): what does it mean to be a person? How do we relate to our environment and demonstrate ways that campus community members can contribute to a more sustainable, accessible world for all. In this session, staff from the Office of Sustainability and the Office of Disability and Access will highlight key features of their guidelines for events, outline the challenges and successes in the process of this project, and detail how they plan to keep the program current and up to

date. Then, the presenters will provide a space for a discussion of key takeaways presenters will provide a space for a discussion of key takeaways and questions about the implementation of these guidelines at the organizational level.

Biographies

Kate Keppen (she/her) is the Director of Sustainability at Ursinus College. In this role, Kate advocates for the facilitation the integration of environmental stewardship at Ursinus College on a foundation of social equity and economic viability. Kate is an Ursinus College Alumna (Class of 2005). After graduating from Ursinus with a dual degree in Environmental Studies and English, she earned her Master's degree in Environmental and Energy Policy from the University of Delaware in 2007. Most recently, Kate worked for six years at the Berks County Conservation District as the County's Watershed Coordinator. Kate also worked for the State of Delaware as an Environmental Scientist and for various conservation-oriented nonprofits. Kate lives with her husband in Boyertown, PA and enjoys hiking the various trails and parks of southeastern PA.

Dee Singley (she/they) currently services as the Director of Disability and Access at Ursinus College. Dee has their PhD in Special Education from Lehigh University and has been working in disability and access services in multiple liberal arts colleges since 2006. Dee uses the social model lens of understanding disability and access to inform communities about disability and access. While much of Dee's work focuses on facilitating accommodations for students under the American with Disabilities Amendments Act, Dee works strategically and intentionally to provide resources, education, and support for all stakeholders to think proactively about infusing equitable practices and design across the college environment. Outside of her work in disability and access, Dee loves being a parent and spouse, and when the opportunity arises, loves being in the classroom to teach courses to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Joanna Timmerman (she/her) currently serves as the Assistant Director of Disability and Access at Ursinus College, her alma mater. Since graduating with her master's in education with a concentration in higher education from Villanova University, Joanna has worked in various areas of higher education, including institutional research, student engagement, and disability and access. Joanna's passion is providing students with equitable opportunities for success, educating campus constituents about inclusive practices and universal design, and creating a space for students to feel affirmed, valued, and empowered. Her specific research interests include emotional support animal policies, deconstructing ableist language patterns, and intersectional educational programming. Outside of work, Joanna enjoys spending time with her dog Maxie, crafting, and eating ice cream.