

22nd Annual Weingarten Center Disability Symposium
Shared Responsibility and Collaborative Partnerships
March 8, 2024
8:15am-4:00pm

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

Speakers/Workshop Presenters

Morning Plenary Speaker:

Oral Healthcare for Persons with Disabilities: Finding the Accommodations that Work and Training the Next Generation to Make it a Reality for All

Presenter: Mark S. Wolff, DDS, PhD, Morton Amsterdam Dean Professor, Department of Preventive & Restorative Sciences, University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine

This session will discuss a brief history of the barriers confronting individuals with a variety of disabilities and receiving oral healthcare. Within the United States healthcare system, very few provisions have been made to permit equitable oral healthcare to be delivered to people with disabilities. In addition to understanding the barriers in receiving equitable healthcare, Penn Dental Emergency Medicine has led the education community in reducing these barriers by teaching every oral healthcare provider to deliver optimal care to individuals in their own community, regardless of health status and disability experienced.

Biography

Dr. Mark S. Wolff is the Morton Amsterdam Dean of the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine and a Professor in the Department of Preventive & Restorative Sciences. He holds a DDS (1981) and PhD in Oral Biology and Pathology (1997) from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Stony Brook. Prior to Penn Dental Medicine, he held leadership positions with Stony Brook University and NYU. He has been a lifelong advocate for individuals with disabilities through the lifespan. Dr. Wolff started his dental career as a private practitioner, creating a family practice that focused on the medically compromised

and disabled patients of all ages. He has published more than 100 papers and chapters and edited multiple textbooks and is an experienced principal investigator for extramurally funded research.

Afternoon Plenary Speaker:

Partnership between Academic Advising and University Life

Academic advisors serve many roles from advising students about course selection to giving guidance about resolving an academic problem. Advisors serve as an essential resource for students who might find it challenging to navigate the host of resources available for them to access. Students who suspect they have a disability confide in an advisor to determine what they should do. Although Disability Services is responsible for making the determination of accommodations, the disability advisors engage with academic departments to ensure advisors and faculty understand their roles in the accommodation process. At Penn, an alliance has been created between the Associate Vice Provost of University Life and the College of Arts and Sciences advising team with the goal of providing a bridge of understanding regarding disability and academic accommodations.

Panelists:

Dr. Ricardo Howell, Associate Director and Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs

Rupert Neish II, Assistant Director of Advising Services and Academic Support

Dr. Wally Pansing, Associate Director of Academic Advising and Assistant Dean for Advising

Dr. Josephine Park, President's Distinguished Professor of English

Sharon Smith, Associate Vice Provost, University Life

Moderator: Dr. Ryan Miller, Senior Director, Weingarten Center

Workshop Presentations

CRUCIAL COLLABORATIONS: A Practical Framework to Assure Access, Equity, and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities and Increase Collaborative Partnerships

Presenters: Eileen C. Berger, Michael Berger, Neal Lipsitz

The editors discuss “CRUCIAL COLLABORATIONS: A Practical Framework to Ensure Access, Equity, and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities” (in press, March 2024). The Framework, developed by the presenters, offers an empirically-based Framework that encourages collaborative practices promoting inclusion and equity in the classroom, administrative offices, and community. This approach helps to establish shared responsibility in providing empowerment and belonging of students with disabilities (SWD) in academic and student life. The Framework, based on “lenses” and “stakeholders”, considers the

complexities of laws, policies, and practices, as well as roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders to ensure institutional compliance with civil rights and disability law as well as the distribution of responsibilities among stakeholders. This presentation is designed to help stakeholders provide inclusive interactions and effective services for students with disabilities.

Biographies

Michael Berger, MBA, PhD, is Professor of Chemistry at Simmons University, where he has taught chemistry, climate change, and sustainability for nearly 20 years. Berger uses a variety of high-impact methods to engage students in chemistry, including research, learning communities, service-learning, mentoring, technology, and study abroad programming. He advocates for the inclusion of women in science—and for equal access for all students. He coedited *Environmental Research Literacy: Classroom, Laboratory, and Beyond* (American Chemical Society, 2020). Berger has presented the framework at the Postsecondary Disability Training Institute, AHEAD, and NASPA national meetings and has served as the faculty representative on a Simmons task force that developed guidelines for enhanced ADA compliance.

Neal E. Lipsitz, PhD, is Associate Dean for Student Well-being and Director of Student Accessibility Services at the College of the Holy Cross. He oversees counseling and psychological services, health services, student wellness education, and student accessibility services. Lipsitz is a licensed psychologist and has worked in the field of college health, wellness, and student development for almost 40 years. He presents frequently at local and national conferences on various aspects of service provision to students with disabilities. In addition to teaching at the postsecondary level for many years, he has a number of publications, and maintains a small private practice.

Eileen Connell Berger, MS Ed, served as Assistant Director of the Office of Student Affairs and Access and Disability Services Administrator at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (recently retired), was director of the Office for Students with Disabilities at Salem State University and Bunker Hill Community College. Additionally, she partnered with faculty, students, and staff to create disability-focused community events and programs increasing visibility, leadership, and belonging for students with disabilities. Her professional career includes work as a speech, language and hearing educator, consultant, and administrator in public and private K–12 schools for two decades prior to her 28 years as Disability Administrator in higher education. Eileen regularly consults, writes, and presents with colleagues on aspects of disability, diversity, policy, and practice. She holds leadership roles as a consultant to nonprofit boards and organizations and maintains a private disability consultation practice.

The SWAT Team: Developing Student Workers to Implement Accessibility on Campus

Presenter: Jordan Colbert

The assistive technology and services landscape of higher education is becoming increasingly more complex and time consuming for disability service offices to fully engage with. This is resulting in more tools and offerings being created to support those with various disabilities, while simultaneously handing out general suggestions on helpful technology, hoping that one will stick. This invariably leads to technology abandonment, which affects student learning, feelings of support, and overall success at an institution. Yale University's disability service office is responsible for providing assistive technology, alternate formats, and accessible media to almost 3000 students with disabilities. To handle the volume of student requests and vast amount of faculty content, a team of student workers assists in achieving the mission, vision, and goal of our office. The Student Workers in Assistive Technology (SWAT) Team, housed in Student Accessibility Services office, is comprised of 50+ workers. This session is intended to go through the basic formation of this program at our institution and outline the process of establishing this program as a model for other institutions.

Biography

Hailing from South Jersey, **Jordan Colbert** identifies as and is proud to be a biracial first-generation and low-income graduate. He received his B.A in Classical Studies from the University of Pennsylvania and a Masters of Marriage and Family Therapy from the University of Southern California (USC). He started in disability services in 2015 as a Graduate Counselor and transitioned to working as an Assistive Technology Specialist for USC in 2017. Prior to working in the field of accessibility, Jordan served as a psychotherapist with high school students and provided Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy to substance abuse populations. At Yale, he coordinates all assistive technology services for students with disabilities, serves on the President's Advisory Committee on Accessibility, and Co-chairs the Vendor Relations Committee of the [Library Accessibility Alliance](#).

Dual Perspectives on College Readiness: ODS and DOS brave the storm together!

Presenters: Kathy Loder-Murphy and Lauren Kerton

Never has it been more vital to have solid campus partnerships than this academic year. At Rutgers University, the Office of Disability Services and the Office of the Dean of Students have solidified our union to assist in the delivery of services to a very unique student population. Our shared offices are in daily contact, via multiple channels (phone, email, instant messaging) to keep ahead of our community experiences, to troubleshoot on the micro and the macro level, and to support each other and our individual teams in training and resources. This presentation is a collaborative effort of the Office of Disability Services and the Dean of Students. The presenters will provide anecdotal data on what we have seen to date, what our offices are experiencing on a student and parent level, and how we best serve this unique student as a joined force! We will address the crossover of our offices in managing

accommodations such as extensions on assignments, consideration for absences and temporary conditions like concussions. student.

Biographies

Kathy Loder-Murphy began her seasoned career in disability services as a recreational therapist. Acquiring her master's degree in counseling, Kathy has worked in settings such as rehabilitation, partial care, private practice for brain injury treatment, and for the past 15 years, higher education. Kathy currently holds the position of Assistant Director in the Office of Disability Services at Rutgers University.

Lauren Kerton began her journey in higher education, working for several years as an Assistive Technology Specialist in the AccessAbility Services at Western Connecticut State University. She went on to pursue a master's degree in College Students Affairs at Rutgers University, while completing a graduateship in the Office of the Dean of Students – Advocacy, Outreach & Support (DOS-AOS). Lauren continues her work at DOS-AOS, where she is a Senior Coordinator for Student Support, working with students experiencing temporary conditions.

Everybody Matters: Best Practices for Fostering an Accessible, Inclusive, and Welcoming Campus

Presenters: John Woodruff and Chiara Latimer

As ADA Coordinators and Disability Support Staff strive towards a more accessible and inclusive campus, it is essential that they enlist a diverse representation of partners from the campus community. As more colleges and universities include and prioritize disability and belonging in their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, we will begin to see a paradigm shift. As a result, shared responsibility and collaborations will foster a neuro-inclusive and welcoming campus environment for students, faculty, staff, and guests with apparent and non-apparent disabilities. We will discuss physical campus accessibility as well as digital/online and website accessibility along with professional development opportunities available through an Inclusive Pedagogy and Practices (IPP) certificate program for faculty and staff and an annual Access and Inclusion Week featuring inclusive campus practices including accessibility topics such as Universal Design and Neuro-inclusive environments.

Biographies

John Woodruff, MS Health Education, is Senior 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 40 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 11 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.

Engaging Students Who Don't Identify as Disabled

Presenter: Emmett Binkowski

As disability services professionals and student support staff, we are charged with ensuring that students have the resources they need to reach their academic goals. At the same time, students who need accommodations are responsible for self-identifying as a student with a disability and completing the Disability Services registration process. What happens when a student with a medical condition or mental health diagnosis does not identify with the word "disabled"? How do we support students who may qualify for accommodations, but who are reluctant to speak with Disability Services due to stigma or concerns about privacy? These cases are often the times when connections between the DS office and other campus supports (such as academic advisors, cultural centers, Student Health, and more) are most important. This session will discuss strategies for disability services staff and campus partners to work together to engage these students.

Biography

Emmett Binkowski (he/they) is a Disability Specialist at the Weingarten Center. In this role he supports Penn students with disabilities, determining reasonable accommodations and connecting students with campus resources. He holds a Master of Social Work degree from Penn's School of Social Policy & Practice and a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Bryn Mawr College. As a social worker, his professional experience includes accommodations in higher ed, case management, and community engagement.

Welcome Home: How Harvard Has Bridged the Gaps Between Disability Services and College Residential Life

Presenters: Robyn Bahr and Becky Melville

Harvard's Disability Access Office (DAO) has always prioritized the needs of students before any other constituents. Over the past few years, we've worked to extend that level of responsibility, empathy, and care to other university colleagues, and, in particular, have established new norms for collaboration with folks in Housing and Residential Life. At Harvard College, students are expected to live on campus for all four years: Their residential community experience is an important aspect of the Harvard curriculum. DAO had often received feedback from colleagues that our accommodations decisions put strain on Res Life staff, who felt isolated from our procedures and did not understand our determinations or had little time to implement them. Thus, we initiated new systems to address these concerns and foster stronger relationships with Housing staff to cultivate.

Biographies

Robyn Bahr is the Assistant Director of the Disability Access Office at Harvard University. She began her career in disability services at the Perkins School for the Blind, where she coordinated a national program for deaf-blind individuals. She has been with Harvard since 2015. She holds a B.A. from Amherst College and an Ed.M. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Becky Melville is an Accessibility Advisor in the Disability Access Office at Harvard University. Becky works directly with students to identify resources and accommodations to increase access in academic, residential, and student life. She conducts one-on-one meetings with students, reviews documentation, and engages with faculty and staff regarding the implementation of accommodations. She holds a B.A. from the University of Maine and an M.Ed. from Springfield College.

The Disabled Coalition: Fostering Peer-Peer Support for UPenn Students with Disabilities

Presenters: Dale Brokaw, Lex Gilbert, Haydr Dutta

Undergraduate, graduate, and professional students with disabilities face additional barriers to accessing academic and social settings at university. These challenges include navigating institutional infrastructure for disability services and accommodations, coping with social stigma from peers and faculty members, and overcoming physical barriers accessing buildings or classroom materials. Students with disabilities also require additional mentorship on how to effectively navigate employment and workplace accommodations post-graduation. Social and peer-peer networks can help to prevent isolation and promote community support for issues that students with disabilities routinely encounter on campus. We will be discussing the Disabled Coalition at the University of Pennsylvania—a community and advocacy group for

undergraduate, graduate, and professional students at the University of Pennsylvania. We will discuss different initiatives that the Disabled Coalition has hosted to promote peer-peer support including self-advocacy, career workshops, and speaker events.

Biographies

Lex Gilbert is a pre-law junior, studying Communication at Annenberg and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences. Disability diagnoses and the challenges of being a FGLI student at an Ivy League have made their life difficult in a lot of ways, but they have persevered. This is particularly evidenced by their career progression. Lex works as a peer anti-violence educator at Penn Violence Prevention and has held several roles working in DEI for global firms. Outside of titles and internship positions, they are especially passionate about ending mass incarceration, promoting LGBTQ+ acceptance, creating opportunities for underprivileged populations, and cultivating disability justice. The various impacts of disability are unknown to a lot of able-bodied people, including professors, faculty, and students. Lex hopes to eradicate biased negative attitudes, ignorance, and stigma with the student group they lead, The Disabled Coalition.

Partners in Service: Collaborating to increase access to service opportunities for students with disabilities

Presenters: Joanna Timmerman and Angela Upright

At Ursinus College, the Office of Disability and Access (ODA) serves over 30% of the student body. The probability that at least one student in any given class, scholarship program, work study job, or club is a student with a disability is relatively high. In many ways, offices across the college have met that reality with an increased commitment to accessibility in their sphere of campus. A phenomenal example of an office that acknowledged and understood this shared responsibility is UCARE, the Ursinus Center for Advocacy, Responsibility, and Engagement.

Colleges are sometimes unclear on their obligation to support extracurricular involvement for students with disabilities (Szucs & Harpur, 2023); this ambiguity is not only detrimental to college outcomes but detracts from the students' experiences and growth in college. UCARE knew that, to have an equitable and justice-oriented focus on student development, students needed to perceive community service and civic engagement as accessible to them. In this session, the presenters will discuss how this partnership came to be, how the institutional structure at Ursinus College supports this collaboration, connections to the literature surrounding disability and community service, and some practical tips for professionals looking to make these types of connections at their institutions.

Biographies

Ang Upright (she/her) is the Associate Director of the Ursinus Center for Advocacy, Responsibility, and Engagement and coordinator for the Bonner Leaders & Scholars in Service programs at Ursinus College. The praxis of justice, advocacy, and educational access is an integral part of her academic and professional foundation. Ang has created and facilitated multiple trainings to prepare the Ursinus community to work with our community partners such as positionality and reflection on identities, utilizing the strengths-based approach and a growth mindset, community asset mapping, the power of storytelling, and decolonizing service learning. Outside of Ursinus, Ang serves as a house manager at St. Mary's Family Shelter and enjoys fostering animals.

Joanna Timmerman (she/her) currently serves as the Interim 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.

How to NOT Feel So Alone: Maximizing Community Partnerships

Presenters: Michelle Mitchell and Jennifer Osinski

With the population of persons with disabilities being the most diverse and prevalent in the US, Disability Service Providers (DSPs) find themselves with greater numbers of students to serve while feeling more isolated. This presentation will explore the benefits of creating teams and partnerships with internal and external constituents leading to greater support for our students. This will be accomplished through a myriad of interactive activities exploring the various benefits of internal, community, and state partnerships. Feeling alone is probably the most prevalent Disability Service Provider (DSP) answer to one of the disadvantages of working in a community college. Partnerships with internal college student support offices is a starting point. Folks in the community such as community human resource agencies, school districts, vocational rehabilitation, and such lead to a plethora of support for DSPs and resources for students at the institution. Building this social capital transfers responsibility from the DSP and places it back on the folks already in the community to serve the individuals of the community. We will demonstrate how to make these connections both internally and

externally as well as to effectively use these connections to wrap yourself in a comprehensive team so you will never feel you have to make the decision by yourself.

Biographies

Michelle Mitchell has worked over her lifetime to liberate others from barriers and provide a sense of belonging. Throughout Michelle's story, she has impacted these two causes both personally and professionally: from advocating in her K-12 school years, and barrier removal in her higher education experience as she obtained her Baccalaureate and Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, to creating a culture of belonging by implementing the first community college IPSE in Pennsylvania. Michelle does not shy away from hard work and is a "bulldog" when she passionately believes in something. To Michelle, creating a meaningful experience that leads to a meaningful existence for ALL people is essential to our society's survival. As a result, her nickname is the "Velvet Hammer".

Jennifer Osinski is a vocationally dedicated person that is motivated to ensure accessibility in higher education. Also, she has a great amount of experience in high school to college transition. She has earned a BA, M.Ed. and MS, Pennsylvania Teaching Licenses, ADA Coordinator and Paralegal Certifications, which all allow her to be a dedicated advocate for accessibility. Jennifer welcomes collaboration and partnerships to ensure that her students have the best educational experience possible.