

*23rd Annual Weingarten Center Disability Symposium*

*Location: Houston Hall*

*March 14, 2025*

*Program Schedule*

<b>7:15 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.</b>	<b>Registration Check-in/Breakfast</b>
<b>8:15 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Welcome Remarks: Sharon Smith</b> , Associate Vice Provost for Integrated Community Care and Student Support, University of Pennsylvania
<b>8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.</b>	<b>Plenary Speaker: Carrie Ingersoll-Wood</b> , Director, Disability Cultural Center at Syracuse University
<b>9:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Transition to First Workshop</b>
<b>10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Workshop #1</b>
<b>11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.</b>	<b>Transition to Second Workshop</b>
<b>11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.</b>	<b>Workshop #2</b>
<b>12:15 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Lunch/Conversation</b>
<b>1:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.</b>	<b>Interactive Plenary with Malik Muhammad</b> , Inaugural Director of Interpersonal Development and Engagement in University Life, University of Pennsylvania
<b>2:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Transition to Third Workshop</b>
<b>2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Workshop #3</b>
<b>3:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Conversation Time/Farewells</b>
	<b>Optional: Visit the Center for Accommodated Testing (weather dependent)</b>

# Presentation Descriptions, Speaker Biographies, Room Assignments

## Morning Plenary Speaker

### Centering Student Voices: Disability Justice, Storytelling, and Positive Disability Identity Development

**Presenter: Carrie Ingersoll-Wood**  
**(Location: Bodek Lounge)**

In this engaging plenary session, Carrie Ingersoll-Wood, Director of the Disability Cultural Center (DCC) at Syracuse University, will illuminate how storytelling and self-representation can be harnessed to foster positive disability identity development to build inclusive, resilient communities. Attendees will learn how Disability Cultural Centers (DCCs) empower students to celebrate disability as a cultural and social identity. The session will demonstrate how centering student voices creates spaces for belonging, solidarity, and pride while addressing the intersections of ableism, equity, and identity to foster a sense of belonging through programs aligned with the 10 principles of disability justice.

Participants will explore the transformative power of narrative and gain tools to challenge stereotypes, celebrate disability culture, and implement storytelling-based initiatives that align with the broader goals of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Through interactive activities, attendees will deepen their understanding of disability as a cultural and social identity and leave inspired to build stronger disability communities in their own contexts.

Through four interactive activities, participants will explore practical strategies for narrative-centered initiatives and community engagement that promote solidarity, empowerment, and sustainability in advocacy.

### Biography

**Carrie Ingersoll-Wood** is the Director of the Disability Cultural Center (DCC) at Syracuse University and a Ph.D. candidate in Teaching and Curriculum in the School of Education. A former middle and high school English teacher and university supervisor for English Education preservice teachers, she brings a wealth of experience in education and mentorship to her role as the director of the DCC. Under Carrie's leadership, the DCC connects students with the disability community both on and off campus through innovative programming and events. These initiatives highlight the history, culture, and contributions of the disability community, creating opportunities for meaningful engagement and education. Her vision ensures that every Syracuse University student encounters the DCC during their time on campus through DCC sponsored events. The DCC's programming aligns closely with Syracuse University's broader mission of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility and emphasizes intersectionality, belonging, and positive disability identity development while addressing ableism as both internally and externally oppressive to disabled people. Through these efforts, Carrie is transforming Syracuse University into a model for inclusivity and disability cultural engagement, ensuring that students leave with a deeper understanding of the rich history and ongoing contributions of the disability community.

## Afternoon Plenary Speaker

### Unlocking Intentional Engagement: Centering the Power of Storytelling in Action

**Presenter: Malik Muhammad**

**(Location: Bodek Lounge)**

Intentional engagement is key to building a truly integrated and collaborative world, especially regarding disability. This interactive workshop explores how storytelling can be a powerful tool for fostering understanding and challenging our preconceived notions. Through guided reflection and discussion, participants will examine preconceptions and explore practical strategies for disrupting predispositions around disability. We will delve into the journey to social solidarity, emphasizing the importance of exploring the multiple facets of identity and uplifting the eclectic experiences within the disability community. Join us to learn how to curate more interconnected spaces for everyone. This workshop will empower you to expand your advocacy for positive change.

#### Biography

**Malik Muhammad** (he/him) is the Inaugural Director of Interpersonal Development and Engagement in University Life. A Philadelphia native, Malik holds a bachelor's in Psychology as well as a Master's in Higher Education Counseling and Student Affairs from West Chester University (WCU) in Pennsylvania. Within his role at Penn, he serves the campus community by fostering opportunities for education, discussion, and dialogue that promote critical thinking. As a sibling to the Cultural Resource Centers and several other campus partners, he works to cultivate intentional community building that uplifts Penn's principles of non-discrimination, expanding access, and empowering all students across the many vibrant communities that make up our campus. Additionally, he wows audiences as a professional actor, singer, and dancer in musical theater throughout the Philadelphia and Tristate area. As an advocate for the power of storytelling in multiple facets, he is elated to partner with the Weingarten Center to continue impacting his communities with this program.

## Workshop 1: Presentations

### Cultural Responsiveness in the Interactive Process and Beyond

**Presenter: Gabrielle Clark, M.S. Ed**

**(Location: Bodek Lounge)**

Many educators are aware of culturally responsive teaching practices (CRT), which center students' unique, multi-faceted identities in the classroom while addressing gaps in equity. Bringing CRT and cultural competency to higher education is a less-talked-about but necessary practice to effectively reach, engage with, and empower college students with disabilities. In this session, we discuss the intersection between CRT and disability identity, and how educators can incorporate CRT principles into their work with students with disabilities. Practitioners will be challenged to incorporate cultural competence into all facets of their work, such as through the interactive process (disability accommodation determination), collaboration with faculty, within the college classroom, and through development of student programs.

Using the lens of CRT and self-reflection, participants will enhance their understanding of cultural competency and leave with a toolkit to better affirm student identities and foster a sense of belonging, ultimately contributing to personal and academic success.

## **Biography**

**Gabrielle Clark**, M.S. Ed is the Associate Director of Student Accessibility Services at The College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. She is the incoming President of the New England Association on Higher Education and Disability (NE AHEAD)) and has held leadership roles on the Executive Board for the past three years. Gabrielle has presented at local and national conferences on Disability Inclusion and Access (AHEAD National; Postsecondary Disability Training Institute (PTI), and NE AHEAD). Her primary areas of study are on campus collaboration, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and preparing Disability Services providers to work with diverse and changing populations. Gabrielle teaches graduate courses on disability inclusion at Simmons University in Boston, Massachusetts.

## **Dreaming Big: Imagining Our Ideal Campus Culture around Disability**

**Presenters: Liz Derickson, Catherine Herbes, Traci Huppman, Susan Smythe, Andrea Vassar, and Rose West**

**(Location: Hall of Flags)**

In this interactive session, we will imagine what our campus communities would be like if there was true equal access. We will describe efforts to “dream big” on our campus, including in the physical, cultural and digital landscapes. What is the current state of affairs? What are the main obstacles and key opportunities? What are effective strategies for moving toward our ideal state? We will also discuss examples of how small, incremental progress has snowballed over time and examples of zero-cost initiatives.

## **Biographies**

Our group is composed of different members of the Swarthmore College community. We are committed to advocating for equal access for disabled people and to strengthening the disability culture on our campus. We are:

- **Liz Derickson**, Associate Dean of Academic Success
- **Catherine Herbes '27**, co-head of the Swarthmore Disability Association
- **Traci Huppman**, Assistant Director of Student Disability Services
- **Susan Smythe**, ADA Program Manager and Senior Project Manager in Facilities
- **Andrea Vassar**, Director of Student Disability Services
- **Rose West '26**, co-head of the Swarthmore Disability Association

## **On the PATH to Success: The Power of Connection in Mentorship and Neurodiversity**

**Presenters: Steph Evans and Amanda Bonino**

**(Location: Class of 1949)**

In this presentation, we will explore the transformative role mentorship can play in supporting neurodivergent students. Join Amanda & Steph, two neurodivergent individuals working in higher education, in discussing firsthand how mentorship fosters connection and success. We will share our personal experiences with neurodiversity and discuss the Rowan University PATH Program, which helps neurodivergent students thrive through career readiness, personal connections, and resource networks. We will also address the challenges unique to neurodivergent mentorship, emphasizing the importance of shared experiences and understanding. Ultimately, we advocate for inclusive mentorship practices that benefit both students and mentors.

### **Biographies**

**Steph Evans** (she/her) is a part time accessibility specialist at Rowan University in the Office of Accessibility Services. Her job consists of approving accommodations for students, reviewing students with Emotional Support Animals on campus, and providing coaching to students in the Rowan PATH program. She has a Masters of Arts degree in Higher Education and a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Environmental and Sustainability Studies from Rowan University. Through working in accessibility services, she discovered she had ADHD and has been navigating this new diagnosis while mentoring neurodivergent student

**Amanda Bonino** (She/Her) is a Neurodivergent, First-Generation student who is passionate about advocating for others in higher education. She serves as the Graduate Coordinator for Accessibility Services & The Center for Neurodiversity as well as a PATH intern. In these roles, she supports Rowan Students who identify as Neurodivergent or Disabled, assisting students in creating educational support plans and navigating campus life. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Rowan University, an Associate's Degree in Biological Science - Healthcare Science and she will be completing a Master's Degree in School Psychology in May 2025. As a passionate & dedicated Disability Rights Advocate, her professional contributions extend beyond Rowan University. She actively supports and serves on the boards of several nonprofit organizations dedicated to Disability and Neurodiversity equity.

## **Workshop 2: Presentations**

### **Fostering a Culture of Care and Community: A Shared Commitment**

**Presenters: Simmee Abiko and Amy Weiss**

**(Location: Bodek Lounge)**

As students navigate their academic journey, identity is often at the core of their decision-making compass. For students with disabilities, feeling part of a campus community can mean the difference between surviving and thriving. For institutions to create a culture of care for students, the responsibility cannot fall only on specific offices (cultural centers, disability services), but must be a shared commitment with continuous collaboration between staff, faculty, and students. In this session, we will begin with a brief

overview of educational research and sociological theory related to the importance of sense of belonging for students. Next, we will explore the Weingarten Center's model of integrated care that systemically seeks to destigmatize asking for support and uplift students with disabilities throughout their time at Penn. We will identify key collaborative partnerships that create a continuum of support and encourage students to utilize campus resources. Finally, we will discuss some scenarios that also allow you to consider how we can best support students with disabilities and reflect on the models of your own institutions/departments. Participants should come ready to interact and discuss strategies and ideas!

## **Biographies**

**Simmee Abiko** is the Director of Instructional Design for Integrated Care at the Weingarten Center. In this role she works with Weingarten colleagues, campus partners and faculty to develop more effective and meaningful connections with and within the Center. Simmee is currently working on an EdD in higher education at Temple University and is interested in the role that educational development plays in student success and faculty wellbeing.

**Amy Weiss** (she/her) is the Case Manager for Integrated Care and Interim Director of Disability Advising, Education and Advocacy at the Weingarten Center. In her role as Case Manager, Amy meets with students to assess their needs, recommends campus resources, and aids students in navigating Weingarten Center services. In her role as Interim Director of Disability Advising, Education and Advocacy, Amy supports the accommodation process in close collaboration with Disability Specialists and key campus partners. She holds an MS in Higher Education from Drexel University, a JD from Georgetown University Law Center, and a BA in political science (minor in psychology) from Columbia University.

## **Sidelined: Athletes' Grief, Gratitude, and Disability Identity**

**Presenters: Gregory Hannah and David Walsh**  
**(Location: Hall of Flags)**

Injury is a universal human experience that can affect us mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. For student athletes, injury can lead us to struggle with feeling disconnected from our team, lack of confidence, feeling helpless, and questioning our identity and purpose. For seven years, "Sidelined" seeks to provide students and student-athletes with an opportunity to reflect on their experiences with injury, and how those experiences have healed and transformed them in ways beyond the physical. In asking students to reflect on their injury experiences, we will ask them to call to mind the Kintsugi gold from their own life that helped repair and transform them. Two staff and two students will share their stories of this event through the years.

## **Biographies**

**Greg Hannah** is the Director of the Office for Access and Disability Services at Villanova University, and founder of the student group LEVEL. For the past 15 years, Greg has collaborated to build a culture of inclusion at Villanova, with an entrepreneurial approach as a former athlete and forever coach. Recently,

Greg was awarded the ASACCU Integration of the Principles of Good Practice Award: Bringing Social Justice Experiences to the Next LEVEL and NACE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Excellence Award: Disability Inclusion in the Workplace Conference. Greg is also a Board Member for the Mark Bookman Foundation, ProFound, and Team LeGrand at the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation. Greg's proudest achievement is being "just a guy from Jersey" where he lives with his wife, three kids, and german shepherd.

**David Walsh** is the Campus Minister for Sports & Spirituality in Villanova University's Office for Mission & Ministry. In his role, David provides pastoral outreach to Villanova's Athletics community (student-athletes, coaches, and staff) and provides various opportunities (team retreats, small groups, community reflections) to help them connect their faith and spirituality with their athletic experience. David earned a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication from St. Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont in 2010 and earned a Masters of Arts in Theology and Pastoral Ministry from Villanova University in Villanova, Pennsylvania in 2015. David was born and raised in Massachusetts and remains a die-hard Boston sports fan even though he now lives in Philadelphia with his wife and twin sons.

**Two current college students** who are retired athletes will share their own bios live during the presentation.

## **Workshop 3: Presentations**

### **Can We Come Too? Event Accessibility Without the Zoom Fallback**

**Presenter: Monica Kessel**  
**(Location: Hall of Flags)**

Many student affairs practitioners want to increase the accessibility to events but might not know where to start. Adding a virtual component to events increases accessibility in some ways, but also expresses to disabled students that their presence is optional. So, how can we address this?

Research conducted with Georgetown's Disability Cultural Center found 8 low-cost or no-cost recommendations to increase accessibility for on-campus, in-person events. The results showed disabled students' increased sense of belonging and formation of a disabled identity. Join this presentation to learn about these methods, how you can start using them at your respective campuses, and how increasing access to in-person events helps to create belonging for disabled students.

### **Biography**

**Monica Kessel** (She/They) is an Events and Reservations Coordinator in UPenn's division of University Life, specializing in coordinating student events. They have a masters in Higher Education Administration from Georgetown University where they focused on multicultural competence and DEIA in postsecondary education. Their graduate research centers disability culture as it relates to involvement and belonging. As a member of the disabled community themselves, Monica incorporates disability accessibility into their everyday practice to increase awareness and acceptance.



## Class Notes for All! Encouraging UDL-Inspired Equity Through a System of Shared Class Notes

**Presenters: Marni Jones and Jen Clark**  
**(Location: Class of 1949)**

Meeting the needs of students who have the accommodation to receive support with class notetaking can be time-consuming and/or expensive for a disability services office. What's more, students set up to receive supplemental notes as an accommodation have reported feeling embarrassed, burdened, or otherwise uncomfortable about having such a need. But a Universally Designed system of class notes that is shared by every student in the class can address all of those issues. The question is, how might we entice faculty to use such a system?

Participants in this engaging session will be provided with demonstrations of several shared notes systems, a list of their benefits (as reported by students and professors), and tips for how to promote the use of shared class notes to faculty and college administrators.

### Biographies

**Marni Jones** (she/her) has been the Dean and Executive Director of two offices at Dickinson College since 2010: Access and Disability Services and SOAR: Strategies, Organization, and Achievement Resources. She has been a conference presenter, a contributing book author, a commencement speaker, and a workshop facilitator on many topics ranging from accommodation strategies to inclusive pedagogies. Marni holds an MEd in Special Education, an MA in Directing, a Certification in Early Childhood Education, and a Teaching Certification from the US Peace Corps. At Dickinson, in addition to championing Universal Design and managing systems for increasing access and minimizing barriers for students with disabilities, she has received recognition for her work on numerous committees, including the President's Commission on Diversity and was selected for the *Leadership in Diversity Education Award*.

**Jen Clark** (she/her) is the Access Strategist and ADA Coordinator at Dickinson College in the division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In this role, she supports Dickinson students with an array of differing abilities. She helps determine reasonable accommodations, ensures accessibility across campus and connects students with campus partners and resources. Jen holds a Master of Education in Teaching and Curriculum along with a Certificate in Autism, a Minor in Early Childhood Education and a Bachelor's in Special Education. As a former professor and special education public-school teacher, Jen's professional experience includes case management, understanding and applying disability law, researching best practices, and providing disability-related supports and accommodations in both K-12 and higher ed settings.