

***24th Annual Weingarten Center Disability Symposium:
Optimize the Student Experience Through Campus Partnerships***

***Location: Houston Hall
March 13, 2026***

Program Schedule

7:15 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.	Registration Check-in/Breakfast
8:15 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Welcome Remarks: Sharon Smith , Associate Vice Provost for Integrated Community Care and Student Support, University of Pennsylvania
8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.	Plenary Speaker: Karen Andrews , Executive Director, Disability Resource Center, The University of Arizona
9:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Transition to First Workshop
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Workshop #1
11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	Transition to Second Workshop
11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	Workshop #2
12:15 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch/Conversation
1:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.	Plenary Panel: Campus Partnerships for Student Support at Penn Presenters: Emmett Binkowski, Batsi Bvunzawabaya, Kaitlin Irvine, Sarah Johnson, Amy Weiss
2:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Transition to Third Workshop
2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Workshop #3
3:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Conversation Time/Farewells

Presentation Descriptions, Speaker Biographies, Room Assignments

Morning Plenary Speaker

Optimizing Success Through Collaborations and Partnerships

Presenter: Karen Andrews

Location: Bodek Lounge

Get ready for an engaging and thought-provoking keynote: Just Like the Wheels on a Bicycle or a Wheelchair – Optimizing Success Through Collaborations and Partnerships. Using the powerful metaphor of wheels, spokes, and hubs, this session illustrates how effective collaboration drives success in disability services. Just as spokes connect to a hub for smooth movement, strong partnerships link the disability services office to every corner of the university. Through interactive discussion and practical strategies, attendees will explore the “rules of the road” for building and sustaining these vital relationships. You will leave energized, inspired, and equipped with actionable tools to maximize collaboration and optimize success in your daily work.

Biography

With more than 16 years of higher education disability experience and more than 12 years of K-12 special education experience, **Karen Andrews** is a visionary leader in disability services, now serving as the Executive Director of the Disability Resource Center at the University of Arizona. She has a passionate commitment to creating a culture of inclusion for everyone, recognizing the intersecting identities of the disabled. She works to ensure equitable opportunities as well as compliance with federal laws, state regulations, best practices and University-wide and campus guidelines related to equal access, barrier elimination, and resources and services for disabled students. Karen’s work extends nationally as she served six years on the Board of the Association for Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) as a Director-at-Large, was the AHEAD Board liaison to the Knowledge and Practice Communities (KPCs), and is the former chair for the organization’s Race, Ethnicity, Diversity and Disability (REDD) KPC. She is the 2022 awardee for the AHEAD Duraese Hall Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Award. Every day, Karen and her service animal, Dooley, show up to serve the University of Arizona community in advancing the cause of disability as diversity. Karen is a national conference speaker, program reviewer, mentor, and disability services consultant. Karen earned a BS in Elementary and Special Education from Northern Arizona University and an M. Ed. in Adult Education and Development from Strayer University. She is currently pursuing her juris doctorate in Executive Law from Purdue Global Law School.

Afternoon Plenary Speaker

Campus Partnerships for Student Support at Penn

Presenters: Emmett Binkowski, Batsi Bvunzawabaya, Kaitlin Irvine, Sarah Johnson, Amy Weiss

Location: Bodek Lounge

Biographies

Emmett Binkowski (he/him) is Senior Associate Director of Disability Services at the Weingarten Center. In this role, he supports Penn students with disabilities, determining reasonable accommodations and connecting students with campus resources. He also advances the mission of the Weingarten Center through departmental initiatives and connections with campus partners to support accessibility at Penn. He holds a Master of Social Work degree from Penn's School of Social Policy & Practice.

Batsi Bvunzawabaya, PhD, brings over a decade of dedicated experience in public health initiatives, clinical counseling, and mental health to her role as Director of Integrated Care Initiatives with Wellness at Penn. With roots in Psychology from Alabama A&M University, she holds a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Auburn University, specializing in minority mental health, body image concerns, sexual trauma, racial and ethnic identity development, and suicide prevention. Her journey at Penn spans twelve years. During this time, she has passionately contributed to the University's mission. Notably, she has devoted much of her time to fostering well-being and highlighting the strengths in diverse communities.

Kaitlin Irvine (she/her) is Assistant Director of Advising Services & Academic Support in the College of Arts & Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania. She is a member of the CaseNet academic support team, which assists undergraduate students experiencing challenges that impact their academics. In her role, she advises and case manages students, with a particular emphasis on connecting them with campus resources. She also leads advising-related student communications for the College. Prior to Penn, Kaitlin worked for many years in college access non-profits. She earned her M.Ed. in Counseling from the College of William & Mary and B.A. in Anthropology from Dickinson College.

Sarah Johnson (she/they) is the Associate Director for Case Management and Outreach within the Office of Student Intervention Services. In this role, Sarah provides support, advocacy, and referrals to campus resources to students experiencing distress and other situations that may interfere with their ability to function in the Penn community. She also leads outreach efforts to raise awareness of Student Intervention Services among students, staff, and faculty and serves as a liaison to the Weingarten Center to provide support and consultation on cases where students may have complex needs related to their accommodations or disabilities. She holds a Master's degree in Sociology from Lehigh University.

Amy Weiss (she/her) is the Case Manager for Integrated Care at the Weingarten Center. In this role, Amy supports undergraduate and graduate students referred to her by academic advisors, program coordinators, student health and counseling providers, and other campus partners. Amy meets with students to assess their needs, aids them in navigating Weingarten Center services, including disability accommodations, peer tutoring, and learning consultations, and connects students with appropriate campus partners and resources. Amy provides guidance to students who require additional support, follows up with them regarding next steps, and confers with deans' offices and other departments across campus to ensure coordination of care. She also serves as a consultant to other Weingarten Center staff in determining which University resources

would be instrumental in helping students while also facilitating outreach to University offices. Prior to this role, while working in career services at Drexel's Kline School of Law, Amy presented and wrote on the topic of supporting law students with disabilities. Before transitioning to a career in higher education, she practiced labor and employment law for 12 years with a focus on the ADA and federal civil rights cases. Amy 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.

Workshop 1: Presentations

Four Step Approach to Disability Inclusion

Presenter: Charnessa Warren

Location: Class of 1949

This session will introduce the 4 Step AP Approach to disability inclusion. The approach was implemented by multiple stakeholder offices at the University of Chicago (e.g., Student Disability Services, Diversity & Inclusion, Equal Opportunity Office, and Employee & Labor Relations). The AP Approach includes four steps: 1) Acknowledge Prevalence, 2) Action Plan, 3) Accountability Promotion, 4) Assess Performance. This approach brought together multiple offices and several campus improvements on behalf of individuals with disabilities. Several disability initiatives impacting the entire campus have been developed by this work group.

Biography

Dr. Charnessa Warren holds a Master of Science degree in Disability and Human Development, with a concentration in Rehabilitative Technology. She earned a doctorate from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership, with a concentration in Diversity & Equity in Education. Dr. Warren currently works with the University of Chicago as the Director of Student Disability Services. She is also a Board Member of the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) and currently leads the Ivy Plus Disability Services Group for higher education disability service providers. With 25+ years of experience as a disability accommodation specialist and assistive technology subject matter expert, Dr. Warren has grown into a well-respected disability inclusion advocate, speaker, leader, and thought partner in establishing innovative ways to incorporate disability in educational and employment settings.

Neurodivergent Student Evolution to Independence: Building Collaborative Supports Across Educational Transitions and Beyond

Presenters: Laura Sibbald McAnulty, Stephen Stunder, Ben Barretta, Edwin Portugal, Leslie Ochroch

Location: Hall of Flags

As neurodivergent students move from secondary education into college, graduate study, and employment, access to neurodiversity-affirming and accessibility-centered opportunities plays a critical role in building independence. This panel examines how intentionally designed supports within

educational and community systems create pathways for increased agency, leadership, and connection rather than ongoing dependence.

Panelists will highlight how to design supportive higher education programming that enables students to develop self-advocacy skills, participate in peer networks, launch student organizations, and engage in professional communities. The discussion will explore how these opportunities evolve across transitions, with families gradually stepping back, students taking on greater responsibility, and institutions shifting from direct support to enabling access and connection. The panel will also examine the role of other community-based organizations in creating environments where neurodivergent individuals can leverage accessible systems to build lasting networks that extend beyond education and into employment and community life.

Biographies

Laura Sibbald McAnulty, M.A., CCC-SLP, is the Executive Director of the Neurodiversity Employment Network of Philadelphia, where she leads programming and partnerships that strengthen access to meaningful, inclusive employment through connection. A nationally certified speech-language pathologist, her career spans public education, higher education, and nonprofit leadership, with a consistent focus on redesigning systems to better support neurodivergent individuals. She previously supervised district-wide autism programs in one of the nation's largest school districts and served as Director for Chestnut Hill College's first neurodiversity college program. An internationally recognized speaker and published author, Laura has presented to audiences across the U.S. and globally on neurodiversity-affirming practices. Her work centers on practical, strengths-based approaches that enable neurodivergent individuals to thrive across classrooms, workplaces, and communities.

Stephen Stunder, Ed.D, is the Executive Director of the Life Skills Through Career Program and Director of Neurodiversity Initiatives at Chestnut Hill College, having previously served as a faculty member for five years. In his roles at CHC, he provides leadership for interdisciplinary programming that supports neurodivergent students across academic, vocational, and life-skills pathways. Dr. Stunder also served as Graduate Program Director for the Human Services Management graduate program, bringing extensive academic and administrative experience to the role. He was a member of the interdisciplinary team that created CHC's Neurodiversity Initiative and currently serves as a Board Member for the College Autism Network, advancing inclusive practices in higher education nationally.

Ben Barretta is currently a junior at Chestnut Hill College, majoring in Computer Systems Management. He loves researching technology and building all kinds of computers. Information Technology is his ideal career path. Ben enjoys sports, video games, and content creation. He loves helping others with technology and in other ways, because it makes him happy when others are happy.

Edwin Portugal, Co-Founder & CEO, LikeYou Health and Wharton MBA alumnus '25. When Edwin was 25, he was diagnosed with autism (ASD level 1, formerly known as Asperger's). His diagnosis gave him a better understanding of his own experiences and a broader understanding of neurodiversity and disability. That moment gave him a new lens on his own life and a drive to make things better for other

neurodivergent adults. Edwin chose to get an MBA from the Wharton School with a clear purpose: to gain the tools to create meaningful change for his community. With his background in public policy and lived experience as an autistic adult, he wanted to learn how to turn vision into impact. That's how LikeYou was born: a neurodiversity-affirming platform built by and for its community.

Leslie Ochroch is neurodivergent and the parent of a neurodivergent son. She has 35+ years of work experience in the healthcare industry, in diverse roles and companies, from start-ups to global healthcare organizations. Leslie has successfully led and delivered initiatives to expand understanding of the value and benefits of neurodivergent individuals to companies, teams, and communities. She has presented to corporations and advised on neurodivergent employment and coaching. Leslie is uniquely positioned to share her knowledge and deep understanding of what it means to navigate the complexities of healthcare services and corporate environments. Leslie's experiences as a neurodivergent individual and the parent of a neurodivergent son fuel her commitment to helping others be their best selves in all aspects of life. Leslie holds a dual BA in Communications & Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania and an MBA from the Fox School of Business at Temple University.

Stronger Together: Integrating Wellness and Accessibility for a Thriving Campus

Presenters: Vanessa LaFreda and Chris Gebhart

Location: Bodek Lounge

A common barrier facing students seeking accommodations is the requirement for sufficient documentation that adheres to specific guidelines. As a means of addressing this barrier, colleges and universities will often provide students with temporary or provisional accommodations. This courtesy may extend to students with minimal documentation or a history of a diagnosis that does not accurately reflect their current functioning and requires reevaluation. Nonetheless, it is not a permanent solution for those seeking long-term support. While many institutions rely on off-campus providers for costly evaluations or on-campus services with a lengthy waitlist, Rutgers–Camden's integrated model ensures equitable, on-campus access to timely support. This forward-thinking and strategic partnership exists on campus between the Office of Disability Services (ODS) and the Wellness Center. The two offices have collaborated to develop a cost-effective, student-centered process that addresses this challenge. This partnership has enabled undergraduate and graduate students, both domestic and international, to receive evaluation services, providing them with a deeper understanding of how they learn, think, feel, and behave in the world around them. During this session, we will highlight relevant student data and emergent themes and discuss the benefits of this partnership in advancing access to wellness and evaluation services.

Biographies

Vanessa LaFreda, Ed.D. (she/her), is a Coordinator of Accommodations at Rutgers University–Camden, where she supports graduate and law school students. Vanessa also serves as a co-advisor to the Delta Alpha Pi (DAPi) Academic Honor Society, Eta Beta chapter at Rutgers University-Camden, which recognizes high-achieving college students with disabilities. She brings extensive experience in student advocacy, case management, and ADA compliance. Vanessa holds a Doctorate in Education with a concentration in Higher Education, a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, and a bachelor's degree in Disability and Rehabilitation Studies.

Chris Gebhart, M.Ed. (he/him), is a Coordinator of Accommodations at Rutgers University–Camden, where he supports the undergraduate student population. He also serves as an assistant men’s basketball coach and as the liaison between the Office of Disability Services and the Department of Athletics. Chris’s professional background includes K–12 special education, academic advising, and student success coaching. He holds a master’s degree in Educational Counseling and a bachelor’s degree in Psychology.

Workshop 2: Presentations

Creating a Disability Pedagogies Certificate Program

Presenters: Elizabeth Catanese and Wendy Kohler

Location: Class of 1949

Funded by a grant from former Community College of Philadelphia student Gunter Pfau, the new Disability Pedagogies Certificate Program at Community College of Philadelphia encourages members of staff, faculty, and administration at the college to promote inclusive practices for students with disabilities. The three-tiered Disability Pedagogies Certificate Program includes ten-week asynchronous courses, quick and meaningful two-week mini-courses, and a capstone project (teaching a workshop or designing an accessibility initiative at the college). Courses currently in the certificate have included or will include: Celebrate and Support Students with Disabilities, Disability Toolkit, Supporting Students with ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder in the College Classroom, Invisible Disabilities, Working with Sign Language Interpreters, and more. Our presentation aims to introduce participants to the program and to collaboratively generate strategies for creating similar programs and opportunities for inclusion at participants' institutions. The end of the presentation will include a fun experiential moment: a lesson from one of our courses involving colorful magnetic blocks.

Biographies

Elizabeth Catanese (she/her) is an associate professor of English at Community College of Philadelphia, where she has taught in the Developmental English program for over fifteen years. Founding director of the CCP Disability Pedagogies Certificate Program, Elizabeth helps faculty, staff, and administrators across the college to create the best possible environment for students. Previously, she taught at Delaware Valley Friends School for students with language-based learning disabilities, where she developed a passion for supporting struggling learners. Her publications include several Macmillan textbook companions that break down writing processes into manageable steps; *The College Mindfulness Workbook* (Kendall Hunt), co-authored with Kate Sanchez; the poetry chapbook *Reiteration/Relationship* (Harbor Editions); and the six-book children’s series *Mount Olympus Theme Park* (ABDO).

Wendy Kohler (she/her) has served as Director of the Center on Disability at Community College of Philadelphia for more than a decade, working closely with faculty, staff, and students to advance an inclusive and accessible learning environment. She leads college-wide initiatives to strengthen equitable access, provides strategic guidance on accessibility efforts, and collaborates across departments to ensure students with disabilities receive the coordinated support they need to succeed. Wendy also oversees the Gunter Pfau donation, which celebrates the unique contributions of students with disabilities and helps

make the Disability Pedagogies Certificate Program possible. Previously, she served as Associate Director of Disability Resources and Services at Temple University.

In For the Long Haul: Student Perspectives on Intra-Campus Collaboration and Building College Disability Communities to Last

Presenters: Catherine Sostowski Herbes and Rose West

Location: Hall of Flags

Disability culture is a relatively new development on many college campuses. Many student disability organizations affiliated with colleges in the Philadelphia area (such as the University of Pennsylvania, Swarthmore College, Haverford College, Bryn Mawr College, and Drexel University) have only materialized in the last five years. While these are welcome changes, they give the students who have founded these organizations cause to wonder – will the disability communities they have struggled to build on their college campuses survive after they graduate? Students only have four years to influence campus culture, making college administrators, faculty, and staff a vital source of constancy to ensure long-term success. Told from the perspective of upperclassmen undergraduate students, this presentation explores ways in which college administrators, faculty, and staff can be active participants in intra-campus collaboration, thereby supporting disabled students, students seeking to create disability organizations, and existing student disability organizations. We categorize forms of student support in two ways: experiences that focus on student life and experiences that seek to bring the broader disability community to campus. Combining these two approaches, by focusing on student experiences both on and off campus, establishes the precedent that sharing disabled experiences on college campuses is valued and creates more ‘in it for the long-haul’ student opportunities that give students principal agency in establishing the disability community they wish to see.

Biographies

Catherine Sostowski Herbes (she/her) is a junior at Swarthmore College, majoring in Political Science and Economics on the pre-law track. She is co-founder and co-president of the Swarthmore Disability Association (SDA), established in January 2024. In addition to speaking on a panel at the 23rd Annual Weingarten Disability Symposium, Catherine has served on the Swarthmore Coalition on Well-being and as a member of the Swarthmore Student Disability Services Director Search Committee.

Catherine also works regularly with Swarthmore administration and student organizations to coordinate campus-wide disability events and to bring disabled guest speakers to campus. Outside of the classroom, Catherine works as an Archives Associate at the Friends Historical Library and sings with Grapevine, the oldest continuously running a cappella group at Swarthmore College.

Rose West (she/her), a senior at Swarthmore College, majoring in Political Science with minors in English and Psychology, takes every opportunity to discuss disability both in and out of the classroom. Beyond her role as a founder and co-president of her college’s first disability centered affinity group, the Swarthmore Disability Association, Rose works as both a Student Wellness Educator and an Inclusive Excellence Fellow, developing the “Disability Identity, Community, and Support at Swarthmore” project. She has specifically worked to bring disabled advocates to campus, has addressed inaccessibility in campus infrastructure, and is presently creating Disability Pride Week programming. Her best friend and partner in crime is her Seeing Eye Dog, a loving and wiggly chocolate lab named Nara.

Blueprints for Belonging in the Dorms: Partnering for Accessible Student Safety

Presenters: Gregory Hannah, Skylor Morton, Connor Hayes, Spenser Norman, Daniel Duffy, Kayla Concannon

Location: Bodek Lounge

Universities strive to be a “home away from home” for residential students. While most would agree that access is more important than aesthetics, intentionally blending interior design principles with universal design is essential to supporting students’ safety, comfort, and dignity. Housing accommodations form a delicate puzzle, requiring staff to match a wide range of needs to a finite number of beds across our soon-to-be multi-campus environment. Requests can be simple or highly complex—sometimes predictable, other times contradictory. Some doctors, families, or students require a roommate for emergency assistance; others need a private room for medical privacy, equipment storage, or the presence of a personal care attendant. Students may face difficult trade-offs, such as choosing between living with friends or living in an allergen-controlled space. Demand has risen sharply for alternatives to traditional communal bathrooms, including sinks suited for cleaning medical equipment like CPAP machines, toilets that allow for GI privacy, and showers with adequate space, seating, and grab bars. When accommodation requests conflict, demand exceeds supply, budgets are strained, and on-campus housing is not guaranteed, staff must make difficult decisions. In response to rising requests for accessible and disability-related housing, the partnership between Villanova University’s Office for Access and Disability Services (ADS) and Residence Life has evolved into an intentional, highly customized coordination model that supports disabled, chronically ill, neurodivergent, and gender-expansive students.

Biographies

Greg Hannah is the Director of the Office for Access and Disability Services at Villanova University, where he provides strategic leadership for the office, supports ADS staff, and advances access and inclusion for students with disabilities across campus. A member of the ADS team since 2009, he was instrumental in creating LEVEL, the office’s flagship student organization, and has led initiatives that have strengthened disability inclusion for students, faculty, and staff. In 2023, Greg and campus partners received the National Association of Colleges and Employers Award for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Excellence for the Disability Inclusion in the Workplace Conference. In 2020, his team was honored with the Mission Integration Award for Diversity and Inclusion by the Association of Student Affairs at Catholic Colleges and Universities for *On Another LEVEL: Providing Students with Disabilities a Seat at the Table*. Greg’s scholarship has appeared in the *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* and the *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*. His work has also been featured in the *New York Times*, ESPN’s *College GameDay*, and other national media for his commitment to inclusive higher education.

Kayla Concannon, MS, OTR/L, CBIS, is the Assistant Director of the Office for Access and Disability Services at Villanova University. Kayla is a disabled occupational therapist, certified brain injury specialist, sex educator, and educational accessibility researcher. Kayla currently is a leader of the Disabled

Villanovans Employee Resource Group, Women with ADHD Support Group, inaugural Dietary Safety Committee, and Student Life Representative of the University Staff Council.

Daniel Duffy serves as the Housing Services Specialist at Villanova University. He received his bachelor's degree from Villanova in 2022 and is working on going back to school for a Master's in Higher Education. He has been working at Villanova for 4 years in Residence Life. In his role, Daniel collaborates with the Office of Access and Disability Services to work with campus partners to ensure that students have their housing accommodations met.

Connor Hayes is the Accessibility Specialist in the Office for Access and Disability Services at Villanova University. He graduated from Villanova in 2021 as the President of the student organization LEVEL. After a year of service, he returned to Villanova, where he has spent the last several years working with the Office of Residence Life to provide housing accommodations.

Skylor Morton, Director of Residence Life for Housing Operations, is originally from Greene County, Virginia, where he earned a master's degree in Higher Education from Old Dominion University. He lives in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, with his wife, Alexis, and their two sons, Skylor Jr. and Jamie. Skylor joined the Residence Life team at Villanova University in June 2022, where he oversees room assignments, room changes, housing selection, and operations for all 31 residence halls, and serves as a member of the Director On-Call (DOC) team. He has worked in Residence Life since 2012, beginning at Virginia Wesleyan University, and most recently served as Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Residence Life at Mars Hill University in North Carolina. Skylor is passionate about supporting and witnessing students' growth during this formative stage of their lives.

Spenser Norman has served as the Assistant Director for Housing Services for Villanova University for the past 4 years. He oversees all housing assignments and room changes in the StarRez housing portal. He works closely with Access and Disability Services, the Office of Mission and Ministry, and Learning Support Services in regard to housing accommodations and identifying ADA-approved spaces.

The Importance of Student Collaborations and Voices in Fostering Meaningful Campus Partnerships

Presenters: John Woodruff and Amanda Bonino

Location: Ben Franklin Room

Campus-wide collaborations are essential in fully preparing students with disabilities for careers after graduation. Although student engagement may look different and vary from campus to campus, creating opportunities early in the college experience is key to maximizing academic success and career readiness. Our presentation will demonstrate how Rowan University's Office of Accessibility Services, along with the Autism PATH Program and Center for Neurodiversity, routinely partners with departments across campus who play a significant role in providing students with experiential learning, paid employment, paid internships, and volunteer opportunities to prepare them for the world of work. We will explore successful partnerships forged over the years with Rowan University's College of Education for graduate internships and the Rowan University Department of Psychology for undergraduate internships that have

provided an easily replicated template with new campus collaborations, such as our new Master's in Social Work program. Non-academic campus partners include Admissions, Residential Life, Orientation, the Student Center, the Library, Advancement, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of the President, providing students with valuable work experience. Attendees will be able to identify collaborators on their campus to connect students with apparent and nonapparent disabilities with meaningful paid, unpaid, and volunteer opportunities to enhance career readiness.

Biographies

John Woodruff, MS Health Education, is Senior Director of Accessibility Services and ADA Coordinator 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 43 years of education, training, and administration of programs for people with disabilities.

Amanda Bonino is a Neurodivergent, First-Generation student who is passionate about advocating for others within educational systems and in transition support services for adults beyond the ages of 18-21. Amanda serves as the Doctoral Graduate Coordinator for the Center for Neurodiversity as well as an Autism PATH Mentor at Rowan University. 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 a Master's Degree in School Psychology. As a passionate and 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. Amanda is the co-founder of Steady Roots Wellness, an adaptive wellness organization geared at creating inclusive wellness and employment avenues for the Neurodivergent and Disabled Community in Southern New Jersey.

Workshop 3: Presentations

Designing for Neurodiversity: The CHAS Pilot of Wellness Spaces in College House

Presenters: Licinia "Lulu" Kaliher, PhD, and Mitchell Holston

Location: Bodek Lounge

College Houses & Academic Services (CHAS) at the University of Pennsylvania launched a pilot initiative in 2025–26 to explore how physical space, design principles, and environmental psychology can advance student well-being—particularly for neurodiverse students. Rooted in research on sensory regulation, belonging, and inclusive design, the Lauder Relaxation Space pilot aims to create restorative environments that address the diverse cognitive and sensory needs of today's students. This project represents a cross-campus collaboration among CHAS, Residential & Hospitality Services (RHS), and faculty and students

from Penn's Stuart Weitzman School of Design, integrating assessment, student feedback, and design innovation within a living-learning context.

The Lauder Relaxation Space was co-designed through a participatory process involving focus groups, staff input, and a review of peer models. Over the past two years, this inquiry evolved through the study of relevant research, exploration of existing wellness spaces on other campuses, and intentional, iterative design. The resulting pilot incorporates flexible lighting, tactile and acoustic materials, and modular furniture to accommodate a range of sensory preferences. The space also includes simple self-assessment tools and a check-in system to document frequency, duration, and types of use. The assessment framework employs both quantitative and qualitative methods. Usage data and observational mapping are complemented by brief student surveys examining perceived stress, belonging, and restorative impact before and after using the space. These data inform iterative refinements and help identify which design features most significantly influence student well-being.

Biographies

Dr. Licinia “Lulu” Barrueco Kaliher serves as the Senior Director of College Houses and Academic Services. Since arriving on Penn’s campus in 2014, Dr. Kaliher has overseen the daily support of students living in the College House system through supervision, advocacy, and advising. Dr. Kaliher is known for her thoughtful approach to mentorship, conflict resolution, and staff training, with a strong focus on student well-being and success. Lulu, as known by her colleagues, is deeply committed to cultivating and creating environments where students feel supported, challenged, and empowered to thrive.

Mitchell Holston (he/him/his) is the House Director for Lauder College House and has served in this role since 2021. Mitchell's time in higher education has led him to develop his own personal philosophy, which is that higher education professionals should prepare students to make the world a better place by serving and leading through their unique talents. He enacts this philosophy through his focus areas, which include student development, student leadership, and social justice. Mitchell graduated with his B.S.B.A. in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing and a minor in Leadership Studies from Auburn University and a M.A.Ed. in Higher Education from Virginia Tech.

Building Bridges, Not Barriers: A Framework for Interdepartmental Accessibility Collaboration

Presenters: Jacqueline Safont and Samuel Shapiro

Location: Class of 1949

Creating a truly accessible campus requires strong, intentional collaboration among Disability/Access Services, Enrollment Management/Academic Affairs, the Registrar's Office, and individual academic departments. Yet many institutions continue to struggle with siloed processes, inconsistent communication, and reactive approaches to accessibility planning. This session presents a practical,

replicable model for building sustainable partnerships that streamline academic processes, strengthen institutional compliance, and improve student experience. Participants will learn strategies for partnering with Enrollment Management/Academic Affairs to integrate accessibility into established shared workflows, enabling students to access accommodation services earlier in their academic career. The session will also highlight strategies for partnering with the Registrar's Office to improve automatic registration processes/assistance, room assignment accessibility reviews, accessibility course substitutions, and exam accommodations. Finally, presenters will demonstrate how to collaborate effectively with academic departments through proactive accommodation planning, departmental liaisons, and communication plans that reduce last-minute crises.

Biographies

Jacqueline Safont is an Assistant Director in Disability Support Services at Seton Hall University and works with students from the nursing, health and medical science, and law programs. Jackie has over twenty years of experience working in higher education at both public and private institutions within disability/accessibility services offices. She has worked with high school students in summer and dual enrollment programs, college, graduate, and professional students. Jackie attributes part of her success in providing services and resources to her students to the partnerships, collaborations, and liaisons she has implemented over the years within academic and administrative departments. In her spare time, Jackie is an amateur photographer and painter.

Sam Shapiro (he/they) is the Assistant Director of the Disability Resource Center at Montclair State University, where he supports students through disability-related services with a strong focus on accessibility, equity, and inclusive campus engagement. Previously, Sam served in Disability Support Services at Seton Hall University, coordinating academic accommodations and partnering across departments to improve access and student experience. Across both roles, Sam has led and supported accessible event planning, ensuring programs and campus activities are inclusive, welcoming, and barrier-free. Sam also specializes in accessible technology implementation, providing students with tools and training that support learning, communication, and independence. In addition, he has extensive experience in housing accommodations, collaborating closely with Residence Life and Housing to address disability-related needs and ensure appropriate placements. Sam's professional foundation was shaped through graduate school and early training experiences, including his time at the University of Central Florida, where he strengthened his commitment to building accessible systems that empower students.

Meeting the Access Needs of Volunteer Student Leaders

Presenter: Erin Mayo

Location: Ben Franklin Room

This session will discuss how to support access needs and implement accommodations for students in volunteer leader positions. Though they may not be formally hired through student employment, we still have a responsibility to check in with our leaders and connect with the appropriate campus partners to set them up for success. Our promising practices and case studies will be shared from work with orientation leaders, residence hall councils, intramural referees, and more. In our respective career trajectories at different institution types, we have found it important to holistically support the students we work with.

This session discusses the intricacies of navigating layered institutions, privacy, and this “gray area” of volunteer supervision and advising.

Biographies

Erin Mayo (she/her) currently serves as the Assistant Director of Student Accessibility Services at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA. Erin received her B.S. degree in Education and History from Salem State University. She earned her Master’s of Higher Education Administration degree, concentrating in policy and finance from George Washington University. Erin has worked in a variety of functional areas, including Residence Life, Admissions, and Student Conduct. Erin has previously worked at medium-sized public institutions, small private religiously affiliated institutions, large research institutions, and large private institutions. In July 2023, Erin had a chapter published in the book titled *DISABLED Faculty and Staff in Higher Education: Intersecting Identities and Everyday Experience*. Erin is currently one of the co-editors of the 2027 Journal of College and University Student Housing (JCUSH) themed issue, which will focus on creating inclusive communities for individuals with disabilities in the residential environment. Erin is an advocate with the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD), where she advocates for greater equity for students with disabilities in higher education.

Strengthening Accessibility Through Campus Partnerships: Faculty, Clinical Sites, and Student Support

Presenters: Ethan Wasserman and Jennifer Fogerty

Location: Hall of Flags

Accessibility Services offices play a critical role in ensuring equitable learning experiences for students with disabilities, but their success depends on strong partnerships across campus and beyond. This presentation will explore how collaborative relationships with faculty, fieldwork coordinators, clinical sites, and student affairs teams create a network of support that is beneficial for all parties. At Thomas Jefferson University, Accessibility Services works closely with “program liaisons,” which are faculty and fieldwork coordinators, to align accommodations with program requirements and to brainstorm other avenues of support. These partnerships foster mutual understanding—educating faculty about student needs while also learning the unique demands of each program. This two-way communication ensures that accommodations are practical, effective, and maintains academic integrity. Beyond campus, collaboration extends to clinical sites and hospital staff, where accessibility professionals advocate for students during placements. These conversations help external partners understand institutional expectations and create environments where students can thrive. Maintaining these connections strengthens trust and reinforces the school’s commitment to inclusion.

Biographies

Jennifer Fogerty is an accomplished higher education administrator with over two decades of experience in student affairs, academic support, and institutional policy development. She currently serves as Associate Provost for Student Affairs at Thomas Jefferson University, where she oversees five departments and manages strategic initiatives that enhance student engagement, academic success, crisis intervention, and compliance. Jennifer has developed centralized processes for Title IX, student grievances, disability accommodations, and graduate orientation. Jennifer began her career at the

University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, coordinating executive education programs. She later held multiple roles at Peirce College, including Manager of the Walker Center for Academic Excellence and Adjunct Faculty Member, where she developed online courses and led grant-funded student support initiatives.

Ethan Wasserman (he/him) serves as the Inaugural Assistant Director for Accessibility and Academic Success at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. In this role, he supports primarily graduate health science students with a wide range of accessibility needs across classroom, lab, and clinical environments, and provides academic support to any student seeking guidance. Before joining Jefferson, Ethan worked at Vassar College as an Academic Coach for students registered with the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity. He earned his Master's in Higher Education and Student Affairs from West Chester University, where he helped launch the RAM Initiative, a two-year post-secondary program for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Ethan also holds a Bachelor's in Public Health from Temple University, where he founded the Shout Peer Mentoring program for students with disabilities. He also completed a Certificate of Advanced Study in Disability Studies from Syracuse University. His work has connected him with a wide range of campus partners, and he is excited to share his experiences and insights at this year's symposium.