

Subject: College Autism Network - November 2021 Updates

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COLLEGE AUTISM NETWORK
ADVOCACY | RESEARCH | TRAINING

College Autism Network Newsletter

November 2021

In this Issue

- We Summited!
- CAN Announces 2021 Awards for Excellence in Practice and Research

5th College Autism Summit Connects Practitioners, Scholars, Employers Over 4-Day Event

Over 350 higher education professionals, scholars, self-advocates, employers and employment specialists gathered virtually for the **5th College Autism Summit**.

Opening speaker, Lydia X.Z. Brown



challenged attendees to be part of the paradigm shift required to make campuses and workplaces fully inclusive, asking us to embrace a radical perspective in our work and in our lives, one that acknowledges and alters the ableist lens many use every day.

Our closing speaker, DJ Savarese, shared his experience heading to Oberlin College as an autistic non-verbal student, told us how he and Oberlin figured out how to support each other, and how he ended up a Phi Beta Kappa double major with a heart for activism and a poet's eye for seeing the world.

In between, attendees learned from three very different, but equally engaging, plenary panels. What does it mean for a campus to be truly "Autism Friendly?" Panelists from Dublin, Ireland, UC Davis and ASAN shared their thoughts. The Summit's second day saw a panel of seven students, diverse in experience and viewpoint, share what has worked, and what hasn't, in their own journeys as neurodivergent college students. On our final day, we wrestled with the complexities of employment—how to know what you want to do, how to get that opportunity, how to be successful at it.

In between, we learned from one another as participants attended some of the 40 general interest sessions on an incredible variety of topics. Attendees also had the chance to learn about and interact with representatives from 25 exhibitors: organizations that educate students, services that support students, and technology makers that see the possibilities for changing the landscape and experience of neurodivergent people.



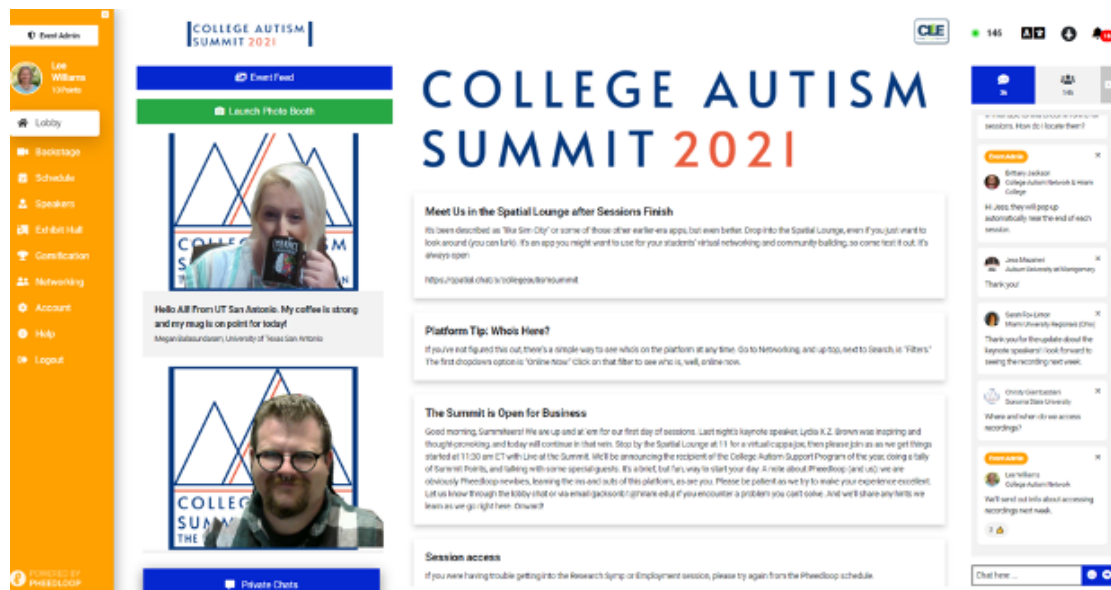
Jodi Duke, Alexandara Raines and Grace Francis of George Mason University had 60 participants attend their session, "Learning From Our Students."

The Summit has always been about providing an opportunity for autism professionals to learn from one another, and in finding collaborators, advisors, mentors, and new colleagues around the globe, "moving the needle" of success for autistic college students. This year's Summit did that, and more.

Many thanks to our sponsors whose support makes it possible for us to offer a high-

quality professional development experience at a very reasonable cost. And we're proud to say that anyone who wanted to attend, but could not afford even the modest registration fee, received financial support from our sponsors so they would not have to miss out on the learning and networking that happens every year at the Summit.

We hope to see people in person next year! More information about the 2022 Summit will be shared in this newsletter (and a hundred other places) after the first of the year. If you'd like to be part of planning next year's Summit, [email Lee Williams](#) to be added to our volunteer mailing list.



The virtual lobby of the Summit was a busy place!

CAN Announces Recipients of Inaugural Awards for Excellence in Autism Support

During the 2021 College Autism Summit, we presented the inaugural College Autism Network Awards for Excellence in Research and Practice. This year's recipients were:

- ★ Outstanding College Autism Support Program: Autism Initiative at Mercyhurst (AIM) at Mercyhurst University, Brad McGarry, Director
- ★ Outstanding Research on Autism in Higher Education: Jessica Monahan, Research Manager, Spectrum Scholars, University of Delaware

★ Outstanding Neurodiversity Workplace Initiative: JPMorganChase Polaris, Columbus, OH, Jeff Cowgill, David Pace and Thomas Suhm, coordinators; partnering with Ohio State University's Nisonger Center and Columbus State Community College

★ CAN Contributor of the Year: Jane Thierfeld Brown, Director, College Autism Spectrum

Next CANVAS Call Scheduled

Please Join our CAN Virtual Association of Scholars!

If your jam is research, you need to be part of CANVAS and join our monthly calls with scholars around the world who will discuss completed or in-progress research projects. Here's the info about our upcoming call. If you'd like to attend, please add your name to the agenda below:

Date: Friday, November 19 at 1 p.m. ET

Presenter: Dr. Mary Baker-Ericzén (San Diego State University)

Presentation Topic: "College SUCCESS: Supported, Comprehensive Cognitive Enhancement & Social Skills Intervention to increase academic soft skills."

Presentation Details: A new, innovative program was developed using a community-based participatory research approach, College SUCCESS, to teach cognitive executive functioning and social cognitive and communication skills that are often referred to as "soft skills" necessary to succeed in college. This open trial research study investigated college students' cognitive and social skills, functional ability and education outcomes as a result of receiving the College SUCCESS curriculum. Feasibility, acceptability, satisfaction and outcome data will be presented along with the intervention components and lessons learned.

Meeting Link: <https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1480736879>

Meeting Agenda:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1X0DwoMq56YK68umhCfuWRJ_jcrXo15y8sbW0GVrwQdk/edit

*This newsletter is published monthly by the **College Autism Network**, an organization supporting the success of autistic college students and the professionals who work with them. Want to share an article? Feature an upcoming event? Our monthly newsletter reaches over 1000 self-advocates and professionals. Send it **to Lee** and we'll share it.*

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