

**Subject:** College Autism Network - July 2022 Updates

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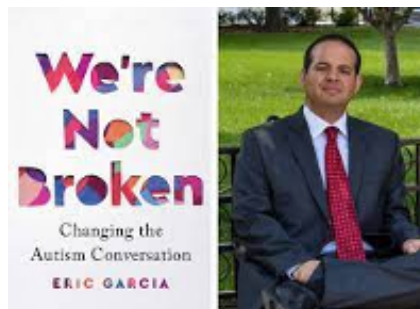


**COLLEGE AUTISM NETWORK**  
ADVOCACY | RESEARCH | TRAINING

## College Autism Network Newsletter July 2022

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### College Autism Summit Announces Opening Speaker

Neurodivergent voices inspire and instruct, and that is definitely the case with Eric Garcia. The College Autism Network is excited to announce that our annual **College Autism Summit**, scheduled for October 12-14 in Nashville, TN, will begin with a conversation

with Garcia, a prominent journalist whose new book, “We’re Not Broken: Changing the Autism Conversation” shows off both his journalistic chops and his personal

experiences as an autistic individual. Garcia says he wrote the book “partly out of frustration over media coverage and myths surrounding autism, and how policies and practices have wrongfully focused on finding a ‘cure’ for autism.” Garcia asks: instead of trying to “fix” autistic people, what can we do to make their lives better?

NPR describes Garcia’s book as “a lyrical mix of myth-busting, memoir, history, field interviews and straight-up advice on how to better understand the autism spectrum, how to talk about it, and why it impacts every one of us.”

Join Eric and others committed to autism support at the sixth annual Summit. For more information and to register for the Summit, visit our [website](#).

Register Today

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## COCOA: The Early Days of our New Student Advocacy Coalition

We are very excited to witness the launch of COCOA (Coalition Of Campus Organizations for Autism). The purpose behind COCOA is simple: help campus autism advocacy organizations get started, grow, connect and



contribute. An initial information session was held on June 16, hosted by conveners Ava Gurba (SUNY-Stony Brook) and Avery Outlaw (ASAN) and was attended by 15 students and recent graduates eager to build a strong coalition. If you are 1) a student or alum who has been involved in advocacy work, 2) a current student and want to start a new autism or neurodiversity organization, or 3) you have resources to contribute to this effort, please contact [Ava](#) and/or [Avery](#) to be added to the mailing list and Discord group that is going to serve as COCOA’s communication tool. (Those are cocoa beans in the photo, btw. I’m not going to put a photo of hot cocoa in a July newsletter).



Image by Freepress

## Representation of Autistic Adults in Books, Movies and Other Media is Improving

**This article**, from UC Santa Cruz, highlights the work of researchers **Nameera Akhtar** (UCSC), **Janette Dinishak**, and **Jennifer L. Frymiare** (Ursinus College) who followed up

on a well-known 2011 article on autistic representation in media. Their new study can be found in the journal *Autism in Adulthood*, and reports an increase in the number of autistic adults (as opposed to children) being portrayed. The authors cite one factor that could be contributing to this improvement specific to movies and television: production teams are increasingly bringing in consultants to advise on proposed portrayals of autism—likely due to calls for more accurate representation from autistic self-advocates. Books have also shown an uptick in portrayals of autistic adults.

[Read the Article](#)

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## New Autism Program Launched at University of Illinois

We are so pleased to hear that CAN friends and previous Summit presenters from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign are launching a new autism support program, Illinois Neurodiversity Initiative. I-N-I will begin this fall, following up on U of I's successful I-Ready virtual summer camp for autistic



college-bound students. Congratulations to all who are making a difference at U of I,

especially Jeanne Kramer, Linda Tortorelli and Aaron Ebata.

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## **CANVAS Call Schedule for July: Dr. Theo Bakker on Study Progression of Autistic Students**



**Presentation Date:** Thurs, July 21 at 12pm ET

**Meeting Link:** <https://ncsu.zoom.us/j/94161179279?pwd=MXZGVFROWmNsbkRscWVtYStXSFludz09>

**Meeting Agenda:** [Please sign up to attend here](#)

**Presenter:** Dr. Theo C. Bakker (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

**Presentation Title:** Study Progression and Success of Autistic Students in Higher Education, A Longitudinal, Propensity Score-Weighted Population Study

**Presentation Description:** In this PhD thesis, I aimed to improve understanding of the study progression and success of autistic students in higher education by comparing them to students with other disabilities and students without disabilities. I studied their background and enrollment characteristics, whether barriers in progression existed, how and when possible barriers manifested themselves in their student journey, and how institutions should address these issues. I found autistic students to be different from their peers but not worse as expected based on existing findings. I expect I counterbalanced differences because I studied a large data set spanning seven cohorts and performed propensity score weighting.

[Sign Up to Attend](#)

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## **Call for CAN Award Nominations-Deadline July 18**

In order to recognize the outstanding work being done by our colleagues, the College Autism Network seeks nominations for our annual *College Autism Network Excellence in Autism Practice and Research Awards*. **Nominations may be submitted** by colleagues, though self-nominations will also be accepted. Recipients will be recognized at the 2022 **College Autism Summit**. *Deadline for nominations*

is **July 18**.



### ★ **Outstanding Autism Support Program** ★

This award is given to a campus-based support program or initiative that has demonstrated excellence in implementation of evidence-guided practices. These may include some or all of the following:

- Individual practices, clusters or combination of activities
- Programs or initiatives that focus on autistic students directly, neurotypical students/peers or faculty/staff in relation to autistic students, or relevant to/about other key stakeholders
- Program may be longstanding or newly-created
- Program may be implemented by campus-based units, departments, or other programs, or may be initiated by independent entities that focus on college students and the higher education setting

### ★ **Outstanding Neurodiversity Workplace Initiative** ★

This award is given to an employer who has established a workplace initiative that recruits and supports autistic and other neurodivergent employees and encourages professional growth and advancement. These may include some or all of the following:

- Support of, and connection to, campus resources and initiatives
- Effective recruiting of neurodivergent applicants
- Outreach and education to all employees about neurodiversity
- Initiatives, policies and processes that demonstrate ongoing support of, and attention to, neurodivergent employees in their professional growth and advancement

### ★ **Outstanding Research on Autism in Higher Education** ★

This award is given to an individual (or research team) who has, in the previous year (2021-22), produced original scholarship advancing research, policy, and/or practice in ways that facilitate college success for autistic students. Such scholarship may include any/all of the following:

- Journal articles
- Project reports
- Books
- Research briefs