

Subject: Start Your Day with CAN's November News and Notes
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College Autism Network News and Notes

November 2024

COLLEGE AUTISM NETWORK NAMES 2024 AWARD WINNERS



On Tuesday, October 15, the College Autism Network recognized two programs and two individuals as the recipients of its 2024 Excellence in Autism Practice and Research awards. The awards were announced at the College Autism Summit, a national conference with 300 professionals and students in attendance.

Newsletter Highlights

CAN Annual Awards
Announced at the College
Autism Summit

Want to Help with Next
Year's Summit?

Webinar on Responding to
Disruptive Students,
November 20, 4 pm ET

CAN Member Recognized
for Outstanding ND Support

PEACES Study Update

CANVAS Research Call,
Friday Nov 8 at 12 pm ET

Seeking Pilot Schools for
Autism Inclusive Campus
Designation

Still Seeking Autism/ND
Student Organizations for
National Coalition

Beyond Akeela Camp
Seeking Summer Staff



Outstanding Research on Autism in Higher Education: Dr. Kristen Gillespie-Lynch

Dr. Gillespie-Lynch is Professor of Developmental and Educational Psychology at the College of Staten Island (CSI) and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She is the Director of CSI's Advanced Certificate Program in Autism, and leads and evaluates a mentorship program for autistic college students at CSI.

Her research topics are wide-ranging, including employment skills, identity development, and mentoring. Dr. Gillespie-Lynch is known among her peers as “both generous and talented, always working to elevate emerging scholars around her with wisdom, humor and great mentorship,” according to one nominator.



Outstanding Neurodiversity Workplace Initiative: Dell Technologies' Neurodiversity Hiring Program

Dell's program and its leader, Danielle Biddick, were recognized for consistent and creative support of autistic

Landmark College Still Has
Seats for Certification
Program Starting Soon



individuals entering the workplace as interns and employees. Dell's program, according to one nominator, demonstrates the company's "enthusiastic embrace of neurodiversity that provides fertile ground for the program to flourish," and notes its significantly lower-than-average turnover rates and growth since its inception in 2018. "By embedding neurodiversity into their talent acquisition pipeline, they are weaving inclusion into the fabric of the organization, and inspiring other businesses to embrace neurodivergent talent."



**Outstanding Autism Support Program:
West Chester University's Dub-C Autism Program**

DCAP, led by director Cherie Fishbaugh, was recognized as a model program among the more than 140 autism support programs that are members of the College Autism Network. DCAP began in 2016, and currently serves 105 West Chester University students. In addition, DCAP supports a summer initiative, the College Autism Readiness Retreats (CARR), an innovative and much-admired program to smooth the transition to college for West Chester students and others.

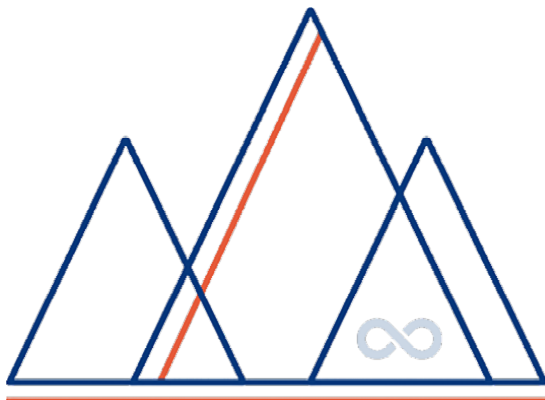
DCAP and Fishbaugh were recognized for being a program that "supports other professionals, providing mentorship and encouragement, especially to other programs in the Greater Philadelphia region," according to a nominator.



**CAN Contributor of the Year:
Karen Krainz Edison, Nisonger Center at Ohio State
University**

Karen Krainz Edison, Associate Director for College Support Programs at the Ohio State University's Nisonger Center, is an active member of the College Autism Network, volunteering as a presenter, a facilitator and a mentor to other professionals. She has been a member of CAN's Practitioners' Advisory Board, and this year played an important planning and support role at the Summit, which was held in Columbus.

**VOLUNTEER TO HELP PLAN NEXT YEAR'S
SUMMIT!**



If you'd like to be part of the magic, we would love to

have your help. You can volunteer to help with programs, logistics, student experience, marketing, research, and networking. Time commitment varies with role. And no, we're not sure where and when the 2025 Summit will be, but you'll want to be there! (And we'll know soon).

Please fill out this [brief form](#) to indicate your interest.

A DON'T-MISS WEBINAR: RESPONDING TO DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS: LEGAL AND ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS AND STRATEGIES



Wednesday, November 20 at 4 pm ET

Join higher education attorney Madelyn Wessel and CAN members Alli MacNamara and John Caldora in a conversation moderated by CAN Executive Director Lee Burdette Williams as we explore the challenges and responses to disruptive student behavior in the classroom and beyond. Questions we'll address include:

- What role does disability play in determining appropriate (and legal) strategies for supporting a student whose behavior in a classroom and elsewhere is seen as disruptive to the learning environment?
- Characteristics often related to autism (blurting, stimming, disproportionate responses, unexpected social interactions) present challenges to faculty and peers who wish to be supportive. How do we balance empathy and expectations?
- Other environments are relevant as well: residence halls, dining facilities, student organizations. What are

obligations and strategies for supporting autistic and other neurodivergent students when their behaviors make it challenging to conduct "business as usual?" How far can we go, should we go, and must we go, to reconcile sometimes-competing interests?

This webinar is *free* for CAN members, and \$50 for non-members. [To register, and/or to join CAN, please go to this link.](#)

CAN MEMBER RECOGNIZED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO A/ND STUDENTS



Long-time CAN member Florencia Ardon, Neurodivergent Student Support Program Manager at Cornell University, was awarded the University's most prestigious recognition award for teaching, the Stephen H. Weiss Provost Teaching Fellowship Award, earning the permanent designation of Stephen H. Weiss Provost Teaching Fellow. Flor was recognized for her use of inclusive teaching practices and her support of neurodivergent students. Flor is especially excited to receive this award as an openly neurodivergent faculty member herself. Congratulations, Flor!

UPDATE ON THE PEACES STUDY



Led by Drs. Bradley E. Cox (Michigan State University) and Brett Ranon Nachman (University of Pittsburgh), the longitudinal, mixed-methods Postsecondary Education: Autistic Collegians' Experiences of Success (PEACES) study is collecting data for Wave 3. In its first two years, nearly 1,000 students from more than 150 students have participated, and the PEACES team is seeking your help in enlisting autistic undergraduate college students to participate this year as they share the experiences around success. Students are eligible if they are enrolled in an undergraduate program at a U.S. college or university, and identify as autistic (formally or self-diagnosed).

Study participation is voluntary. Students will first complete a quick screening tool to determine their eligibility.

Here is the link: studypeaces.com/PublicDistribution

Following successful completion of the survey activity, eligible participants will receive a \$25 online gift card. The team will begin processing the gift cards following completion of the current wave of data collection; distribution of gift cards may take a few months thereafter. Participants will also be asked about their interest to participate in an interview or photo elicitation activity, which would entail receiving an additional \$25 gift card if selected.

For any questions you may contact the team at CED.PEACES@msu.edu

CANVAS RESEARCH COMMUNITY CALL WITH CANADIAN RESEARCH TEAM



Friday, November 8 at 12 pm ET

Join the CANVAS community for a call with Drs. Jonathan Vincent, Megan Ames and Carly McMorris and Ph.D. student Emily Coombs to discuss findings and key themes in their research. This team has examined the support needs, accessibility and experiences of autistic postsecondary students across Canada. In this presentation, they summarize findings from their work including:

- 1) Canadian mapping of postsecondary program for autistic students, as well as facilitators and barriers of development and implementation,
- 2) Major themes of reviews on autism in higher education, and
- 3) Academic and non-academic support needs of autistic postsecondary students.

Their presentation will summarize the Canadian landscape for autism postsecondary services, the key themes of the existing research in the area, and future directions.

Meeting Agenda: [Sign up here!](#)

Meeting Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/5235660844?omn=86200813932>

APPLY TO BECOME A CAN AUTISM-INCLUSIVE CAMPUS DESIGNATION PILOT INSTITUTION



The College Autism Network proudly presents the first North American Autism-Inclusive Campus Designation. The College Autism Network’s “Autism-Inclusive Campus” designation (AICD) is awarded to US and Canadian colleges and universities—regardless of size, type, classification, or mode of delivery—that strive to create and maintain environments that ensure the inclusion and success of autistic and other neurodivergent people—including students, faculty, and staff—in all aspects of their community and mission. The vision of an inclusive campus is one where autistic and other neurodivergent people can live authentically, whether they choose to disclose their neurodiversity; develop personally and professionally; contribute as valued members of a diverse community; and experience a sense of belonging.

We are looking for 3-5 pilot institutions to help test the designation process and provide feedback along the way. Pilot institutions will be chosen to represent a range of locations and institution types. Institutions do not have to have autism-specific programs or social support programs to participate. All 2-year diploma or degree and 4-year degree-granting postsecondary institutions within the United States and Canada are welcome to apply to become pilot institutions. The deadline to apply is November 15, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. PT. Applicants will be notified of CAN’s decision early spring 2025. [Learn more about how to](#)

[become a pilot institution!](#)

SEEKING AUTISM/ND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS FOR NATIONAL COALITION



THE NEURODIVERSITY ALLIANCE

We're excited to be partnering with The Neurodiversity Alliance to support and build a network of autism and neurodiversity-focused student organizations. If you are, or know of, an existing or emerging student organization for autistic and neurodivergent students, we'd like to connect you to the Alliance and other similar student organizations. Please take a few moments to complete this [simple form](#) and we'll be in touch.

GET YOUR COPY OF THIS VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES



College Autism Network
ADVOCACY | RESEARCH | TRAINING



COLLEGE READINESS FOR NEURODIVERGENT STUDENTS



STUDY RESULTS & WORKBOOK

Results from the 2024 survey of over 50 leaders of U.S. college autism and neurodiversity support programs.

Matt Gunter

Introduction by Lee Burdette Williams

College Readiness for Neurodivergent Students is a comprehensive workbook crafted for neurodivergent students and their families as they explore post-high school options. Drawing on data from a 2024 survey of over 50 leaders of U.S. college autism and neurodiversity support programs, this workbook identifies ten essential skill areas vital for college success.

The book covers key competencies in areas such as motivation, the desire to seek and accept help, self-regulation, independent living skills, executive functioning, mental health, academic skills, self-advocacy, physical health, and social connections.

In addition, the workbook includes insights from respondents on how to assess student proficiency in each of these areas. Perhaps most importantly, it presents discussion questions and frameworks to facilitate meaningful conversations, ensuring that students and families are aligned and prepared for the college journey ahead.

College Readiness for Neurodivergent Students is a partnership between College-Ready and the College Autism Network. E-books can be purchased at the [College-Ready website](#), and paperback books can be purchased at [Amazon](#).

SUMMER JOB OPPORTUNITY FOR

NEURODIVERGENT STUDENTS



[Beyond Akeela](#) is hiring! Our overnight summer program provides seasonal staff members with dynamic professional development opportunities supporting neurodivergent teenagers preparing for college. Staff members help Beyond Akeela teens build social relationships, independent living skills, and become better self-advocates. All the while, staff members have a socially fulfilling summer building their personal and professional network. Beyond Akeela staff are provided dorm housing and all meals for the duration of the program.

Here is a link to the job descriptions we are currently hiring for: [Summer Positions at Beyond Akeela](#). Any questions can be sent to Kevin Trimble at kevin@campakeela.com. Thank you for sharing these opportunities with your staff, student volunteers, or program participants looking for more experience supporting neurodivergent teens over the summer!

LANDMARK COLLEGE'S CERTIFICATION PROGRAM WILL BEGIN THIS MONTH



LANDMARK

C O L L E G E

There are still a few “seats” left for “Academic and Cognitive Supports for Autistic Students” as well as other November courses running in Landmark College’s highly regarded online [certificate program in Learning](#)

[Differences and Neurodiversity](#). Participants can take individual, 8-week courses or pursue a graduate-level certificate with a choice of specializations in Autism on Campus and Online, Executive Function, or Postsecondary Disability Services. Although the application deadline was November 3, if you contact the program directly this week, you may still be in time for these winter courses running November 22 - January 26:

- “Academic and Cognitive Supports for Autistic Students”
- “Organization and Operation of Postsecondary Disability Services”
- “Academic Strategies and Executive Function Supports for Students with LD, ADHD, and Autism”

Additional courses are offered in January for those who may not be able to make the November deadline.

Check out the certificate [website](#) or contact Carol Beninati, Certificate Program Coordinator, at institute@landmark.edu or (802) 387-1662

This newsletter is published monthly by the [College Autism Network](#), an independent 501(c)3 organization supporting the success of autistic college students and the professionals who work with them. Want to share an article? Feature an upcoming event? Post a job opportunity in autism support services? Our monthly newsletter reaches over 2400 self-advocates and professionals. Send it [to Lee](#) and we'll share it.

Was someone nice enough to forward this newsletter to you? We're happy to add you to our mailing list to receive it directly. [Send us a note](#).

If you appreciate our work, please consider [joining CAN](#) to receive additional information and discounts on some of our resources and to support our work. Individual and organizational memberships are available.

The [College Autism Network](#) is supported in large part by the [Frist Center for Autism and Innovation](#) at Vanderbilt University.

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