



2025 Calendar

Center for Disabilities Studies

2023-2024 Annual Report

Greetings from CDS

Equity. Recently, the word appears to have taken on a whole new meaning that couldn't be farther from its roots. The term has been co-opted to represent unfair advantage when, in fact, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition of equity is: "a fairness or justice in the way people are treated."

In a fair world, all people should be able to get into their doctor's office, onto exam tables and access equipment like that needed for mammograms and MRIs. All people should have access to the tools and supports that allow them to develop and demonstrate their inherent capability. All people should be able to use websites and digital media to order take-out, deposit their paycheck and make hotel reservations. All people should be able to engage joyfully with music, art and theatre. All people should feel they belong in the spaces they inhabit. In reality, these "shoulds" are not a given for people with physical, intellectual and/or sensory disabilities.

When we allow barriers to persist, disabled people are denied opportunities and benefits afforded to others. Equity isn't about giving disabled people an unfair advantage; the pursuit of equity is about having a level playing field rather than advantage or disadvantage.

As you will see in the pages that follow, the research, service delivery, education and advocacy in which the [Center for Disabilities Studies](#) engages are, first and foremost, about leveling that playing field to ensure that all really does mean all.

Beth



Beth Mineo served her 16th year as director of CDS in 2024.

Making supported decisions to thrive

“Every day, we all make decisions with the support of those we trust,” says Jonathan Martinis, senior director for law and policy at the [Burton Blatt Institute](#). “Individuals with disabilities have the same capacity to learn from mistakes and grow, but our society often doesn’t encourage their independence.”

[Supported decision-making](#) is an underutilized legal alternative to guardianship that enables people with disabilities to exercise their decision-making rights. At the recent [My Life, My Decisions: A Supported Decision-Making Summit](#), professionals, family members, and individuals with disabilities joined to learn more about supported decision-making. The event included a panel discussion featuring five Delawareans with disabilities sharing lived experiences, breakout sessions and access to additional resources.

“The summit helped me meet others who understood my barriers and improved my confidence,” says Jessica Davenport, an event panelist and [Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services](#) community and advocate liaison. “It’s your life. Be your own decision maker.”

People are not aware that there are alternatives to guardianship in our state. “In a post-event survey, we discovered many attendees planning to initiate these conversations with family and coworkers,” says [Ashley Steinbrecher](#), CDS coach.



Jessica Davenport was one of five panelists at the *My Life, My Decisions Summit*, held on the University of Delaware campus in March 2024.

This work was supported by awards from the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council, the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, and the Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The currency in every classroom

Preschool classrooms buzz with lively exchanges among teachers and students, punctuated by songs and giggles. Literacy has its roots in story-reading, story-telling and playing with letters and words. Communication is at the heart of all this glorious learning. Yet maintaining communication-rich environments can be challenging when students can't rely on speech as their primary means of expressing themselves and instead need access to augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices and strategies.

This is where the CDS [Systematic Process for Enhancing and Assessing Communication Supports \(SPEACS\)](#) initiative can make a real difference for students and teachers. "Many educators don't have any experience with AAC users until those students appear in their classrooms," says [Angelia Wilt](#), instructional coach. "SPEACS supports educators in learning how to use both low-tech and high-tech AAC to foster student language development and learning."

The [Seaford School District](#) preschool program wanted to ensure that all children can be active participants and learners. Through classroom visits, coaching sessions, and professional learning, the SPEACS team provides support with lesson planning and implementation. "As SPEACS continues to strengthen teacher confidence, it further supports students in becoming more independent communicators," says Sara Smith, coordinator of special programs in Seaford. "We're laying the groundwork today for our preschoolers to grow into adults who always have access to their voice."

SPEACS also works with teams in middle and high school settings, ensuring that children who use AAC will be supported to express themselves throughout their education experience and beyond.



Hannah Mennella (right), AAC specialist at CDS, helps educators like Sara Blaine (left), early childhood education teacher at the Seaford School District, implement AAC technology in the classroom.

This work was supported with funding from the Delaware Department of Education.

Smarter homes, increased autonomy

“Smart home technology will never replace a human caregiver, but it can reduce the number of times a caregiver needs to visit,” says [Madeline Laquer](#), CDS senior assistive technology manager. “Using this technology in the home environment can be life-changing for individuals with disabilities. These devices can promote autonomy while maintaining a safe and supportive home environment for the user.”

While working for an independent living program, Laquer was introduced to her former client David Miller, who has a developmental disability. Together, they trialed several smart home devices, which Miller implemented in his condo.

Many individuals with disabilities utilize smart home technology for a variety of daily living tasks, such as medication reminders, composing grocery lists, and following recipes. They can access support when they need it most instead of always having someone around. Laquer notes, “Our goal is to identify the skills and features that best support each individual’s needs.”

To showcase the impact of smart home tech, Laquer and Miller delivered a live presentation at UD’s Audion back in April. “The beauty of smart home technology is its universal design,” says Cory Nourie, CDS [Community Advisory Council](#) vice chair, who attended the session. “Everyone can use it in their homes in some capacity. It serves as a powerful equalizer for individuals with disabilities.”

“This is a topic that people have a lot of questions about and don’t know where to start,” says Laquer. “It can feel overwhelming. We’re thrilled to help families see what’s possible and consider new ways for their loved ones to enhance their independence without sacrificing needed support.”



Madeline Laquer (left) and David Miller (right) deliver their presentation on *Enhancing Independence at Home through Technology* on the University of Delaware campus.

The Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI), is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs funding enabled DATI to purchase a multitude of products for our demo and loan services.

Disclosure decisions: Uncovering the complexity

For autistic college students, the decision of whether to disclose their autistic identity is complicated. Many choose not to share their autistic identities due to the stigma surrounding autism and fears of negative consequences such as being seen as less competent.

However, there is little research on when autistic college students choose to disclose and what factors influence that choice. Recently, Michaela Hodges-Fulton, an [Access:Ability Scholar](#) and [Disability Studies](#) minor, and [Jessica Monahan](#), research manager for [Spectrum Scholars](#), worked together to fill this research gap.

“There haven’t been studies focused solely on autistic disclosure in higher education,” says Monahan. “Autism program directors are eager to better understand the nuances surrounding disclosure.”

Though earlier work hints at past experiences being the greatest influence on disclosure decisions, the study identified that a need for accommodations and a university environment that feels safe are the greatest predictors of disclosure. Additionally, students don’t believe that others have a good understanding of autism and wish they could disclose without consequences.

“It’s not a problem that autistic students should be expected to fix,” explains Monahan. “It’s our job [as program staff] to determine ways to make environments feel safe and allow autistic students to share their identities in the most meaningful way.”



Jessica Monahan (left) and Michaela Hodges-Fulton (right) collaborated on a study exploring the nuances of disclosure among autistic college students.

Spectrum Scholars is supported with funding from JPMorganChase. The findings of this study do not reflect the opinions or beliefs of JPMorganChase.

Leadership that transforms education

“Equipping special education leaders with the competencies to succeed is at the core of the [Special Education Administrative Leadership \(SEAL\) Program](#),” says [Deborah Boyer](#), CDS associate director. “We fortify SEAL Scholars’ existing abilities, and they leave the program knowing how to influence special education systems and practices for the benefit of students with disabilities.”

Grounded in the realities facing schools, SEAL consists of 240 course hours across job-embedded and external internships, four intensive courses, shadowing opportunities and a research project that examines a challenge to high-quality service delivery and pilots a solution. Scholars present their findings at the graduation symposium.

With a structured cohort model, the 23-month program builds the Scholars’ peer networks as well as other connections that benefit them for years to come. Some of those connections arise from the mentorship provided by veteran special education leaders as well as district and state administrators. “Our mentors are the backbone of SEAL,” says Boyer. “They go above and beyond to guide our program participants.”

SEAL is now supporting its fourth cohort toward a June 2025 graduation. “This program encourages our scholars to work beyond their comfort zones and prepare fully for the leadership roles they will eventually assume,” says Jeff Conrad, SEAL mentor and retired [Cape Henlopen School District](#) supervisor of special education.

And Jeff should know. Eileen Baker, a member of SEAL’s first cohort, is now his successor in Cape Henlopen.



SEAL Cohort 3 Scholars (left to right)
Carol Wothers, Tarez Ridgeway, Denise
Doughty, Karen Hyatt, and Tyrrea Graves

This work was supported with funding from the Delaware Department of Education.

First look at life after high school

The best way to find out if something fits is to try it on for size. Gabby Parillon, a student from [Cape Henlopen High School](#), experienced college firsthand through CDS's [UDiscover](#) program.

"College was already on Gabby's radar," says [Rebecca Jewell](#), assistant director of CDS's [Career & Life Studies Certificate \(CLSC\)](#) program. "UDiscover gave her a chance to explore what it's like to live away from home and what it takes to be successful in college and career."

The two-week exploratory program uses a person-centered approach to create an individualized experience for each student. Participants live on campus while learning about independence, self reliance, self-advocacy and goal-setting.

"UDiscover is unique because it introduces students to a valuable academic community and job opportunities that tie into their interests," says Jody Hougentogler, executive director of [The Freedom Center for Independent Living, Inc.](#) "Having the chance to explore independence and see the connection between their interests and future goals is a powerful way to bring the idea home."

"Students appreciate being exposed to what college could be like and some of the ways they could envision themselves in that environment," says Brenda Rodriguez, senior social service administrator for the Delaware Department of Labor, [Division of Vocational Rehabilitation](#). Gabby emphasizes how UDiscover introduced her to important life skills and the opportunity to explore a career in fashion. She was recently accepted into CLSC and plans to continue exploring and developing skills learned during UDiscover.



"The UDiscover program was individualized based on my likes," says Gabby Parillon. "I focused on fashion, and we had so much fun together."

This work was supported by awards from the Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Freedom Center for Independent Living, and the Statewide Independent Living Council.

Shaping event inclusion for all

For Gabriela (Gabby) Sanchez, a graduate of [Access:Ability Scholars](#), identifying barriers for children with disabilities starts with the very events that honor them.

To better confront these barriers, Sanchez led an independent study titled “UDance Accessibility,” which explored how large public events can improve accessibility for all ages. “The key is consistent focus on before, during and after events,” continues Sanchez. “Identifying spaces with challenges for access and adhering to the most updated accessibility laws ensures we create an environment where everyone can feel comfortable fully participating.”

Sanchez is pursuing her [Early Childhood Education major](#) and is on track for her [4+1 Master of Education in Exceptional Children & Youth](#). She recently received the [Judy Cohen Schwartz Scholarship](#) award for her continued impact.

“This award honors the unwavering commitment of Judith Cohen Schwartz in serving individuals with disabilities,” says Kristine Ritz, senior assistant dean in the [College of Education and Human Development](#). “We’re celebrating Gabby’s passion to work in this same space.”

“It’s important we continue to emphasize physical and social accessibility to recognize ways people with disabilities are unintentionally being excluded,” says [Laura Eisenman](#), School of Education professor and co-coordinator of the Scholars program. “Awareness is the first step, followed by action. Gabby is an incredible example of how our scholars lead to advance access and inclusion for all.”



“We host events, like UDance, that recognize children with disabilities,” says Gabby Sanchez, Judy Cohen Schwartz Scholarship recipient. “These children deserve the opportunity to be respected and fully engaged, especially with events they are a direct part of.”

The Judy Cohen Schwartz Scholarship supports students pursuing a bachelor of science in education with a minor in disability studies at the University of Delaware, with preference for students who plan to work with those having developmental disabilities.

An evolving tool for an evolving landscape

Now celebrating its 20-year anniversary, the [Delaware School Climate Survey \(DSCS\)](#) isn't exactly a surprise to schools in the area—for great reason. Sparked initially by the innovation of George Bear, former UD professor of school psychology, the surveys continue to offer a powerful tool for schools.

Research indicates that school climate is linked to increased academic achievement and motivation, lower rates of behavior problems and enhanced emotional well-being.

Though not mandated by the state, many Delaware schools—and entire districts—use the survey because it's a research-based instrument. It is offered by the [Delaware Department of Education \(DDOE\)](#) at no cost through the [MTSS Technical Assistance Center](#) at CDS.

The annual surveys are anonymous, completed by students as well as their parents and teachers. Results are then compiled into comprehensive reports educators can use to better understand their school climate.

It is essential that schools have confidence in the data they gather because they make important decisions based on those findings. “Schools prioritize targets for improvement and develop an action plan that will help them reach their goals,” says [Sarah Hearn](#), MTSS Technical Assistance Center program director.

The surveys have continued to evolve as schools express the need for additional information about bullying, student engagement, and social emotional well-being. “The survey has grown from a pilot program at 13 schools to serving roughly 130 schools a year,” says Bear. In 2024, over 34,000 students, 6,000 staff and 6,000 families participated in the DSCS.



Sarah Hearn analyzes data from the Delaware School Climate survey. Celebrating its 20-year anniversary, this survey helps ensure that schools across the state continue to foster positive and inclusive environments for students and educators.

This work was supported with funding from the Delaware Department of Education.

Practice leads to ready

In partnership with [Delaware State Parks](#) and law enforcement agencies throughout New Castle County, the [Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism \(DNEA\)](#) hosted its first [live practice traffic stops](#) in 2024. The stops create a safe space for autistic drivers to become comfortable interacting with first responders.

“Autistic individuals can choose to be drivers or passengers while they learn the protocols of being stopped, what to do and what to expect from a traffic stop,” says [Alisha Fletcher](#), director of DNEA. “When they arrive with their families, an officer will pull them over and go through the steps of a routine traffic stop.”

“It’s just as much a learning experience for the drivers as it is for the officers,” says John McDerby, [Delaware Natural Resources Police](#) deputy chief. Keith Dempsey, [New Castle City Police](#) operations captain, adds, “We all take a piece out of every experience to build our individual knowledge that can be applied to future traffic stops.”

After the traffic stop, families can join officers to debrief and address lingering questions. DNEA’s support doesn’t stop there—it also provides [resources](#) for autistic drivers, families and first responders, including training, evidence-based videos, guides and suggestion cards for what to say during an interaction with an officer.

“The staff and volunteers are dedicated to making this a friendly and accommodating experience,” says Retired Police Lieutenant Charles Sawchenko, DNEA trainer and coach. “We love knowing that if and when these individuals may get stopped, they can think back on their experience with us and know how to best react.”



Delaware Natural Resources Police Fish and Wildlife Officer Joshua Cosden completes a mock traffic stop at Cape Henlopen State Park.

This work was funded by an award from the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services.

Access to life-changing tech

In 2023, Nancy Brubaker, a 91-year-old woman with progressive vision loss, attended a presentation about the Kent/Sussex Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC) at the Ocean View CHEER Center. Managed by the [Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative \(DATI\)](#), ATRCs provide a wide range of supportive technology, often free of charge, to those with disabilities. Brubaker soon scheduled an appointment to learn more.

During Brubaker's visit, she discovered many items that would make a difference to her quality of life. "Generally, vision equipment is not covered by insurance because it isn't considered durable medical equipment," says [Madeline Laquer](#), DATI senior assistive technology manager. "Yet, we can often help people find other ways to acquire the equipment they need."

Through DATI's [Borrow-to-Own Low Vision Devices \(BOLD\)](#) giveaway program, Brubaker secured a handheld magnifier and talking scale. The magnifier can be connected to a monitor, enabling access to fine details needed for sewing, puzzles and other pursuits. After a quick demonstration, Brubaker was ecstatic to head home and start using her new equipment the same day.

"We connect people having all sorts of needs—not just vision—with tools that can help them be more independent," clarifies Laquer. "We also connect people to others looking to 'rehome' devices that they no longer need. Our [AT Exchange](#) listings feature items such as walkers, adapted lifts, hearing equipment, communication devices and more."



Nancy Brubaker is reading printed materials utilizing a desktop video magnifier to enlarge the text. Devices like these are available for loan through DATI.

The Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI), which operates equipment demonstration and short-term loan programs, is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living.

Putting the individual first

A unanimous U.S. Supreme Court decision in 2017 affirmed that [Individualized Education Programs \(IEPs\)](#) for students with disabilities should lead to “meaningful progress” and be based on each child’s unique strengths and needs.

An innovative way for educators to think about educational benefit led to the development of the DE-IEP program at CDS. CDS staff lead teams to take a new vantage point on student progress by looking back three years to examine how student data is connected to individualized goals. It also encourages teams to take a more holistic look at the student and grade-level learning expectations to set rigorous, meaningful goals and define the services and supports that will help students meet those goals.

In 2023, [Lake Forest School District](#) began the intensive training, which requires a minimum of a three-year commitment from districts or charter schools to ensure lasting change. It also takes a village. “Improving IEPs should be seen as an all-hands-on-deck situation,” says Ashley Crawford, curriculum, instructional and assessment specialist in Lake Forest. “Including more district leadership creates greater value for students in the long term.”

District teams develop a learning plan that measures progress across the three years, sets accountability expectations, and supports capacity for sustaining the approach. “We put districts in the driver’s seat because we know it will help them have a greater impact,” says [Brigid Dux](#), CDS instructional coach. “It’s important that IEPs hold students with disabilities to similar standards as the rest of their class. All students deserve the opportunity to become active and contributing members of their communities.”



“We’re learning a lot about how improve IEPs with an enhanced focus on student data,” says Michelle Allman (right), supervisor of special programs at Lake Forest. She and Ashley Crawford (left) embraced the team-based professional learning approach that allowed them to examine the IEPs they developed previously to guide their plans for improvement.

This work was supported with funding from the Delaware Department of Education.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

FUNDING AND FINANCIALS

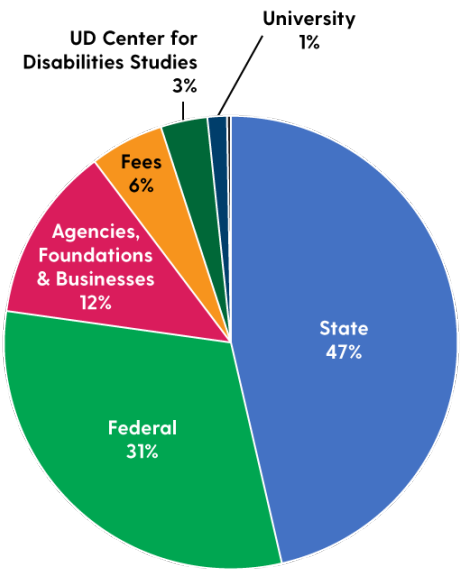
The Center for Disabilities Studies had an operating budget of \$6,550,599 from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

More than 96 percent of CDS funding is realized through grants and contracts from federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations, foundations, businesses and individuals. Included in the federal portion is \$606,330 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living for our core funding as a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. This U.S. government organization is responsible for implementation of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000. CDS also benefits from gifts made by individuals and organizations.

FUNDING BY SOURCE | FY 2024

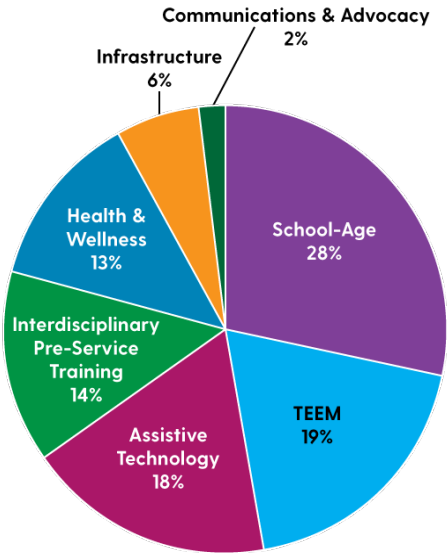
Source	Amount
State	\$ 3,039,076
Federal	2,028,881
Agencies, Foundations & Businesses	810,835
Fees	361,698
UD Center for Disabilities Studies	209,740
University	99,206
Gifts*	1,163
Grand Total	\$ 6,550,599



*This amount indicates what was spent from gift funds. New gifts to CDS in the 2023-2024 reporting year totaled \$8,110.

PROJECT-SPECIFIC FUNDING BY DOMAIN

This chart shows the proportion of the budget expended in support of each of the Center's programmatic domains. The infrastructure domain includes those funds that support overall Center operations rather than domain-specific activities.



FUNDING BY DOMAIN | FY 2024

Domain	Amount
School-Age	\$ 1,859,585
TEEM	1,248,690
Assistive Technology	1,172,860
Interdisciplinary Pre-Service Training	917,697
Health & Wellness	824,147
Infrastructure	413,116
Communications & Advocacy	114,504
Grand Total	\$ 6,550,599

FUNDERS

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Federal Communications Commission

U.S. Department of Education

- Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Office of Special Education Programs

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- Administration for Community Living
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Health Resources and Services Administration

STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Delaware Department of Education

Delaware Department of Health and Social Services

- Division of Developmental Disabilities Services
- Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance
- Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Delaware Department of Labor

- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Statewide Independent Living Council

Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security

- Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council
- Delaware Emergency Management Agency

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, SCHOOLS, FOUNDATIONS AND BUSINESSES

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities
- Education Health & Research International, Inc.
- Freedom Center for Independent Living
- JPMorgan Chase & Co.
- TransCen, Inc.
- University of Delaware
- Wayne State University

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We would like to give special THANKS to those listed here for their generous support through gifts received in the year beginning July 1, 2023 and extending through June 30, 2024.

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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Our mission is to enhance the lives of individuals and families through education, advocacy, service and research related to disabilities. We promote empowerment and opportunity, accessibility and inclusiveness, so all may fully participate in—and enrich—their communities.

The Center for Disabilities Studies is:

- One of 68 University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service nationwide, with core funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living.
- The administrative home to the interdisciplinary Disability Studies minor, the largest minor on campus for ten consecutive years with enrollment this past year reaching 392 students from 37 majors across seven colleges at the University of Delaware.

In 2023–2024, CDS staff and faculty cultivated student learning by...

- Teaching or co-teaching 69 courses/course sections and independent studies, reaching a total of 266 graduate and 903 undergraduate students at the University of Delaware and two other institutions of higher education in Delaware.

- Delivering 8 guest lectures to 42 UD graduate students and 64 UD undergraduate students.
- Providing assistantships/traineeships to 9 graduate students from the School of Education and the departments of Physical Therapy, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Epidemiology and Behavioral Health and Nutrition at the University of Delaware.
- Engaging 69 undergraduate students in the work of the Center.

In 2023–2024, CDS staff and faculty fostered the development of new knowledge—and the translation of existing knowledge—by...

- Developing 27 project proposals internally and with external partners.
- Offering 34 conference presentations and publishing nine journal articles, book chapters and other reports.

- Providing editorial support for 12 journals and serving as proposal reviewers for two funding agencies and two conferences.

In 2023–2024, CDS staff and faculty engaged with national, state and local communities by...

- Serving on 28 boards, committees and task forces external to the University (32% of these at the national level).
- Collaborating with 23 state agencies, 14 national and international agencies and organizations, 69 other units at UD, 70 community-based organizations and three other institutions of higher education.
- Contributing to media coverage about disability issues and the work of the Center in two online/print articles.



Top: Community member Jose Gonzalez at a Lunchtime Learning on Voting Rights & Accessibility for Delaware Voters with Disabilities

Middle: LEND trainee Taylor Trapp

Bottom: Wes Garton, program director of UD's Spectrum Scholars program



At top: Dana Farrior, coach for the MTSS Technical Assistance Center, presents at the Policy & Practice Institute.

At bottom: Anthony Kokoszka, senior assistive technology manager, leads a training at the Kent/Sussex Assistive Technology Resource Center.

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Olga Goncharova-Zapata
Jennifer Horney
Emmanuel Jenkins
Persephone Jones
Stephanie Kaznica
Sarah Mallory
Anthony Middlebrooks
Beth Mineo
Ohiro Oni-Eseleh
Jillian Trabulsi

SEAL FACULTY AND MENTORS

Sarah Celestin
Jeffrey Conrad
Joyce Denman
Sharon DiGirolamo
Sue Dutton
Dana Farrior
Lauren Irwin
Tracy Long
Mary Ann Mieczkowski
Mary Norris

INDIVIDUALS WHOSE SERVICE CONCLUDED DURING THE PAST YEAR

STAFF AND FACULTY

Alexis Ambroise
Debbie Bain
Michelle Bastedo
Tabitha Groh
Emily Curtin
Jayla Godfrey
Leah Krauskopf
Judith MacBride
Laurel McGarry

Victor Schaffner
Mackenzie Shane
Betsy Wahlquist

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Jordan Clark
Emily Consiglio
Annaliese Gandet
Blair Schnitzer
Ashleigh Ward

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Julianna Abbatiello
Azza Al Darai
Caroline Amen
Brandon Awosanya
Will Beardwood
Mia Bilchik
Hannah Covell
Kara Dillenbeck
Lauren Dorf

Sarah Durante
Miranda Eaton
Alexis Forston
Melissa Gatti
Mackenzie Gilmartin
Jessica Gratkowski
Sara Grelak
Isabella Haigney
Brynn Hovatter
Annalise Jackson
Elizabeth Johnstone

Sammy Karten
Morgan Kelley
Gabby Kemp
Erin Leonard
Anna Marchetta
Carley Marien
Carson McClung
Taylor McPadden
Cassidy Melendez-Ocasio
Naomi Metcalf

Angelia Monica
Julia O'Sullivan
Donna Price
Gianna Richason
Katherine Rush
Chloe Sable
Gina Smyth
Sasha Wilson

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

OUR 2023-2024 COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Members of the Community Advisory Council partner with the Center for Disabilities Studies to advance its mission. The council includes individuals with developmental and related disabilities who serve as self-advocates; parents and family members of individuals with developmental disabilities; representatives from disability-related training, service and advocacy organizations; state agency representatives; and others who advocate on behalf of people with disabilities.



ALYSSA COWIN



CHARLES BRYANT



NANCY LEMUS



CORY NOURIE

CAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Alyssa Cowin**, self-advocate
- Susannah Eaton-Ryan**, The Arc of Delaware
- Terri Hancharick**, Endless Possibilities in the Community, parent
- Nancy Lemus**, parent
- Cory Nourie**, advocate

CAC MEMBERS

- Marissa Band**, Disabilities Law Program
- Karl Booksh**, University of Delaware, self-advocate
- Charles Bryant**, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, parent
- Selina Butcher**, The Freedom Center, self-advocate
- Karen Doneker**, parent
- Deborah Dunlap**, parent
- Brigitte Hancharick**, self-advocate
- Kristin Harvey**, Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council

- Elisha Jenkins**, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Jane Luke**, parent
- Dale Matusevich**, Department of Education
- Daniese McMullin-Powell**, self-advocate
- John McNeal**, State Council for Persons with Disabilities, self-advocate

- Melissa Smith**, Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities
- Meedra Surratte**, Parent Information Center of Delaware
- Debbie Talley Beane**, Division for the Visually Impaired
- Pam Weir**, Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens

MEMBERS WHOSE SERVICE CONCLUDED DURING THE PAST YEAR:

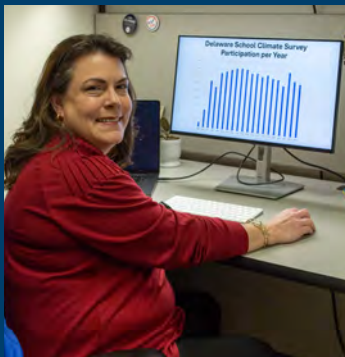
- Anthony Carter**, JEVS Support for Independence



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
**EDUCATION &
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FRONT COVER: (left to right) John Reed, Jonah Reed, and TJ Young are all smiles as they prepare for the College of Education and Human Development's May 2024 convocation ceremonies. Jonah and TJ are graduates of the Career & Life Studies Certificate four-year program.

BACK COVER: Composite photos accompanying stories featured in the 2023-2024 annual report.



Center for Disabilities Studies, University of Delaware, College of Education and Human Development
461 Wyoming Road, Newark, DE 19716 • 302-831-6974 • 302-831-4689 TDD • cds.udel.edu

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