

A PUBLICATION  
OF THE AAIDD  
AD  
HOC STUDENT  
AND EARLY  
CAREER  
PROFESSIONAL  
COMMITTEE

# AAIDD Student and Early Career Professional Newsletter

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF IN- TEREST:

- Thank You, Loui and Camie! (pg. 1)
- AAIDD 2010 Annual Conference (pg. 1-2)

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## Here is the Latest Issue of the AAIDD Student and Early Career Professional Newsletter!

This newsletter focuses on connecting and sharing information with students and young professionals in the field of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). We hope you find this newsletter to be a useful resource. We invite you to get involved in the many ongoing activities of SECPC committee. Please contact Committee Co-Chairs Melissa DiSipio at [MDiSipio@pmhcc.org](mailto:MDiSipio@pmhcc.org) or Judith Gross at [jgross@ku.edu](mailto:jgross@ku.edu) if you have any questions or are interested in joining this active committee. We look forward to hearing from you!



## Thank you, Loui and Camie!

Loui Lord Nelson and Cameron Neece faithfully served as our committee's co-chairs for the last three years. They have recently stepped down from their posts. As such we would like to thank them for their many hours of dedication and

leadership. During their tenure, in addition to serving as co-chairs of this committee, Loui led the student scholarship initiative and Camie served as the newsletter editor. Thank you both for your SECPC service!

## AAIDD 2010 Annual Conference

This summer, AAIDD members and supporters gathered in the charming city of Providence, Rhode Island to share knowledge, honor those with outstanding achievements, and set the course for the future. The 2010 AAIDD Annual Conference was held from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> of June and was attended by more participants than last year. This year's gathering kept everyone busy from Tuesday's pre-conference NADD/AAIDD Symposium all the way through Friday's full day workshops. Participants attended business meetings, three interactive poster

sessions, exhibits, breakout sessions, plenary sessions, and a reception to honor Doreen Croser, and much more. During the conference, fifteen award recipients were recognized for their important professional contributions to the IDD field. The Student and Early Career Professional Committee was also extremely active this year and sponsored events each day of the conference. Thank you to everyone who attended and made this year's AAIDD Annual Conference such a success. See you next year in the Twin Cities!

## AAIDD 2010: Social Gatherings

This conference provided multiple opportunities for social gatherings as well. On the first night of the conference, SECPC members and supporters of SECPC, including distinguished professors and leaders in the field, gathered for dinner, drinks, and lively discussion at a local restaurant. This and subsequent gatherings of SECPC members, students, and professionals from a wide range of disciplines provided excellent opportunities to gain knowledge about current trends in the field, network with key experts and upcoming researchers, and learn more about our colleagues from around the world.



## AAIDD 2010: Student and Early Career Professional Luncheon



The Student and Early Career Professional (SECP) luncheon at this year's annual conference was a huge success! It was well attended with almost 80 AAIDD Fellows and SECPs partaking in a fabulous lunch. Our featured speakers were Valerie Bradley, Steve Eidelman, and Susan Heimlic. This year's presentation focused on the routes each individual took that led them to the IDD field and they offered salient

advice to the diverse group of SECPs present. Additionally, our featured speakers provided a question/answer opportunity that allowed the discussion to address specific questions and concerns in the audience. As always, the luncheon was another wonderful opportunity for SECPs and Fellows to meet, mingle, and get to know one another. We hope to see YOU next year at the SECP luncheon!

## AAIDD 2010: SECPC Presentations

### SECPC Poster

The Student and Early Career Professional Committee (SECPC) presented a poster at the 2010 AAIDD Annual Conference in Providence. The poster highlighted the Committee's initiatives, including the: Student and Early Career Professional Webpage, Newsletter, Webinar Series, Clearinghouse, Student Scholarship Program, Guide Program, and Partnerships and Networking Opportunities. Six members of the Committee presented information from the poster to attendees, sharing ways that students and early career members could get involved. All attendees were impressed by the breadth and scope of the supports provided to student and early career members through the SECPC.

### SECPC Panel Presentation

The Student and Early Career Professional Committee (SECPC) presented during the Early Career Issues and Research Session at the 2010 AAIDD Annual Conference in Providence. Karrie Shogren moderated a panel entitled: "Students and Early Career Professionals in the Field of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Research, Policy and Practice." Shelley Watson, Shea Tanis, and Melissa DiSipio each talked about what brought them into the field of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), the work that they currently do, and ideas for future work. Each commented on their participation with SECPC and working within AAIDD.

# Research and Training Opportunities in ID/ASD

## ID/ASD PSYCHOLOGY

### POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

**The Ohio State University Nisonger Center – UCEDD** offers interdisciplinary clinical and research postdoctoral training in Intellectual Disability (ID) and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The Nisonger Center offers interdisciplinary clinical and research training in the area of ID/ASD diagnostic clinics, psycho-pharmacotherapy, transition programs, health promotion, applied behavior analysis, dual diagnosis, adult social programs, and scale development. The postdoctoral fellowship is 12 months **beginning September 1** with an optional second year pending funding. Postdoctoral fellow annual salary will follow guidelines set in the [NIH Guide Notice \(NOT-OD-10-047\)](#) and will receive [OSU benefits as a postdoctoral researcher](#).

The Nisonger Center was founded in 1966 as an interdisciplinary program of The Ohio State University. The Nisonger Center is a federally-funded University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and part of the OSU Medical Center. We have an interdisciplinary faculty that includes approximately 95 faculty and staff from more than 15 disciplines including: psychology, psychiatry, pediatrics, dentistry, special education, social work, speech & language pathology, early childhood education, nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, applied behavior analysis, public health, audiology, and parent advocacy. Our commitment is to excellence in teaching, services, and research.

**Our Mission:** The mission of The Ohio State University Nisonger Center is to work with communities to value and support the meaningful participation of people with disabilities of all ages through education, service, and research. The Center

provides assistance to people with disabilities, families, service providers, and organizations to promote inclusion in education, health, employment, and community settings. **Our Vision:** Through interdisciplinary collaboration we will lead in research, education and service to improve the lives of persons with disabilities, their families and service providers worldwide. **Our Values:** The Nisonger Center incorporates the values of community inclusion, cultural diversity, and self-determination across the lifespan.

**Requirements include:**

- **Completed doctoral degree in psychology or a related discipline**
- **Demonstrated interest/experience in Intellectual Disability or Autism Spectrum Disorders**

Visit our website for more information:

<http://nisonger.osu.edu>



**Nisonger  
Center**

Send CV, three letters of reference and a cover letter summarizing your experience and goals to:

Marc J. Tassé, PhD, Director - Nisonger Center  
The Ohio State University  
1581 Dodd Dr.  
Columbus, OH 43210  
or email: [marc.tasse@osumc.edu](mailto:marc.tasse@osumc.edu)

**Deadline for applications is February 18. OSU is an Equal Opportunity/ADA employer.**

## SECPC May 2010 Teleconference Summary

The May 14<sup>th</sup> webinar featured Dr. Anna Esbensen at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and Dr. Ann Turnbull, Distinguished Professor of Special Education and co-director of the Beach Center on Disability at the University of Kansas. The speakers provided an overview of how to identify grant opportunities to build your research agenda.

Dr. Esbensen presented first. She expressed that the first thing you should do is ask yourself: Do you really need a grant? Is it valued where you work? She recommended that you find out if it is required to fund your position or attain tenure. Seeking out grants can create opportunities for collaboration with colleagues to complete your work. However, she also warned that the amount of time to commit to writing a grant is substantial, and it is important to determine if it is the best way to spend your time. Dr. Esbensen offered the following tips regarding grant writing:

- Ask colleagues for copies of successful and unsuccessful grant applications and reviewer comments
- Attend classes/workshops/webinars on grant writing
- Work with a mentor on a grant application
- Write grant before you leave one institution and submit it after you get to your new institution
- Know the current requirements – they change frequently
- Talk to people about the review process
- Preempt criticism – if a colleague addresses a concern – address it in your proposal and explain how you will deal with it
- Talk to the program officer to check on the compatibility of your project with the institute
- Team members – good to have more experienced members on your team – make sure bios are specific to the proposed project
- Talk up the strength of your community – university and local supports

Dr. Turnbull presented second and her presentation focused on identifying several sources for grant funding opportunities. She identified several web resources for grant notifications as well as the following grant funding sources:

- NIDRR – National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research
  - Field-initiated Projects – focus on topics aligned with own interests related to rehabilitation
  - Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTC) – focuses on research and knowledge translation
  - Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects – primarily for knowledge translation for stakeholders
- OSEP – Office of Special Education Programs
  - Research projects
  - Technical assistance centers
  - Demonstration centers
  - Leadership training grants
- IES – Institute for Educational Science
  - Special education research programs
  - Special education research and development centers

Dr. Turnbull concluded her presentation with a collection of general suggestions for early career professionals:

- Find collaborators that complement your weak areas
- Seek opportunities to take courses and to participate in training opportunities related to proposal development
- Seek resources within your organization who offer assistance with things like budget development and grant administration
- Develop a relationship with project officers and find out if it is possible to access copies of funded proposals
- Know the RFP guidelines well – study them again and again
- Arrange for a peer review of your proposal before submitting it
- Commit to multiple drafts

Both Drs. Esbensen and Turnbull offered a wealth of information and helpful tips to keep in mind as you begin to develop your own research agenda.

Keep an eye on your email for notice of the upcoming SECPC/AUCD teleconference!

## Student Research Award Highlight

By: Meghan Burke

I was fortunate enough to receive the AAIDD Student Research Award this year. The award is given to two students and/or early career professionals every year through the SECPC. AAIDD fellows choose the award recipients based upon their submitted research abstracts.

My research paper examined the defendants in a local mental health court. Using mental health court records, we examined the phenomenology and outcomes of 224 defendants with and without co-occurring intellectual disabilities in the mental health court. This study had two parts: (1) we examined the prevalence of defendants with intellectual disabilities in the court and (2) we compared defendants with dual diagnoses to defendants with lone mental health disorders.

To examine the defendants, we looked the mental health court records of 224 defendants-93 defendants with intellectual disabilities and mental health diagnoses and 131 defendants with mental health diagnoses only. The defendants all participated in the Davidson County Mental Health Court in Tennessee-the fifth mental health court in the country. Information was collected from the records including:

demographic information, psychiatric history and treatment, medical history, case management history, social and family history, documentation of intellectual disabilities, criminal charges and convictions, substance abuse history and treatment, DSM diagnoses, and case progress notes. Inter-rater reliability was collected on 17% of all files and high reliability was demonstrated.

We found that approximately 11% of defendants in the mental health court also had intellectual disabilities. Compared to individuals with mental health disorders alone, individuals with dual diagnoses were more likely to be younger, male, African-American, and less educated. Furthermore, compared to individuals with mental health diagnoses alone, defendants with co-occurring intellectual disabilities and mental health diagnoses had less social support. They were less likely to be married, cohabitating, or to have had children. They also had less stable family structures. Another difference between the groups related to their symptoms. Defendants with co-occurring intellectual disabilities and mental health diagnoses were more likely to turn against others. In contrast, when compared to defendants with

dual diagnoses, defendants with mental health disorders were more likely to turn against themselves. Defendants with intellectual disabilities (versus those without) more often received behavioral, vocational rehabilitation, and other services, though the two groups did not differ on most outcome variables.

This study demonstrates that 11% of mental health court defendants are individuals with dual diagnoses. Furthermore, these individuals receive less support (familial, social, and financial) and are more likely to turn against others. Individuals with dual diagnoses (when compared to individuals without intellectual disabilities), however, receive more treatment from the mental health court. More research needs to be done to learn about individuals with dual diagnoses in the mental health court system to ensure they receive appropriate diagnoses and subsequent services.

*Meghan Burke is a fourth year doctoral student in Special Education-Low Incidence Disabilities at Vanderbilt University. Her research interests include: families of individuals with disabilities, disability policy, and parent-school collaboration.*

# An International Perspective

By: Anke Gross-Kunkel

As a PhD Student at the University of Cologne who is working on an international research question I think it is very important to be part of an international association for two main reasons. First, my AAIDD membership and especially being a member of the Student and Early Career Professional Committee gives me the opportunity to keep in contact with an international network. Second, this keeps me informed about the newest discussions within our field.

International experiences (especially in the US) were key to broadening my view on research within the field of intellectual disability. During my internship at the Nisonger Center at the Ohio State University five years ago, I was fortunate to work with Dr. Tom Fish and his team on the Next Chapter Book Club (NCBC). The NCBC provides adults with intellectual disabilities opportunities to enjoy books in a fun community setting. Once I returned to Germany I wanted to implement this American idea in my home country because – as in the US – people with intellectual disabilities do not have many opportunities to read. Prof. Barbara Fornefeld from the University of Cologne gave me the chance to do so and now I am writing my

dissertation about literacy of people with intellectual disabilities.

So, early in my career I experienced how fruitful it can be to expand your horizons. This is exactly what the AAIDD network helps you with. An AAIDD membership gives you the opportunity to get in contact with researchers from different countries, exchange new ideas, and learn what is being discussed within the field internationally. One has the chance to do so in various ways: by attending the annual conference, taking an active part in one of the committees, participating in webinars, or reading the AAIDD journals. I would encourage students and young professionals to become a member and be active within this international network to learn from each other and to share ideas not only on a regional basis.



## AAIDD Website

Access the AAIDD Community Page from AAIDD's homepage ([www.aaid.org](http://www.aaid.org)) or from the Early Career Professionals Page ([www.aaid.org/ecp](http://www.aaid.org/ecp)). Click on the AAIDD Community Link and create a profile. You will need to provide a username and password, then can customize your page with a picture, education information, e-mail

address, research or clinical interests, plus whatever you think is relevant. After that, you are free to start a blog, join a forum, or comments on other members' posts. If you have any questions, there is a great Online Help feature, where you type your query and will receive a prompt reply. Happy networking!





## A Publication of the AAIDD Ad Hoc Student and Early Career Professional Committee (SECPC)

Knowledge | Support | Empowerment

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Melissa DiSipio, AAIDD 2010: SECPC Panel Presentation

Meghan Burke, Student Research Award Highlight

Judith Gross, May 2010 Teleconference Summary

Anke Gross-Kunkel, An International Perspective

Archived issues of SECPC Newsletter available at :  
[http://www.aaidd.org/content\\_366.cfm?navID=115](http://www.aaidd.org/content_366.cfm?navID=115)

The goal of the AAIDD Ad Hoc Student and Early Career Professionals Committee (SECPC) is to develop and implement strategies that foster the involvement and representation of students, recent graduates, and professionals in the early stages of their careers within AAIDD. The committee is working on a number of initiatives and meets via teleconference once per month to provide one another with updates on committee initiatives and to share ideas. We are always interested in including more students and new members in our activities. Please contact Melissa DiSipio at [MDiSipio@pmhcc.org](mailto:MDiSipio@pmhcc.org) or Judith Gross at [jgross@ku.edu](mailto:jgross@ku.edu) if you would like to learn more about becoming involved in this active committee.

Please visit our website at:

[http://www.aaidd.org/content\\_297.cfm?navID=86](http://www.aaidd.org/content_297.cfm?navID=86)

## Not yet an AAIDD member.... Join Today!

AAIDD offers a number of membership options for students and young professionals.

AAIDD offers a Student Membership for full time students and a Young Professional Membership for recent college graduates who are new to the disability field. Student and young professional members receive online access to AAIDD's highly ranked journals: *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities* and the *American Journal on Mental Retardation*. In addition to having access to disability leaders and mentors, student and young

professional members receive FYI—the Association's monthly electronic newsletter; discounts at conferences and on books and other publications, and access to AAIDD's Career Connections. Student and Young Professional Members are eligible to vote, hold office, join Action Workgroups, and to have access to the Members Only section of the AAIDD web site.

Student and Young Professional Members will be notified electronically about important events, training institutes, annual meetings, public policy seminars,

teleconferences, and new publications.

Young professionals who are beginning to establish their careers can transition to Active Membership status, and continue to receive all the benefits they enjoyed as Student or Young Professional Members.

For more information on the various membership categories and to join AAIDD visit :

[http://www.aaidd.org/content\\_120.cfm](http://www.aaidd.org/content_120.cfm)