

A PUBLICATION
OF THE
AAIDD
STUDENT AND
EARLY CAREER
PROFESSIONAL
SPECIAL
INTEREST
GROUP
(SECP SIG)

AAIDD Student and Early Career Professional Newsletter

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

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This newsletter focuses on connecting and sharing information with students, young professionals, and their mentors 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 the SECP

SIG.

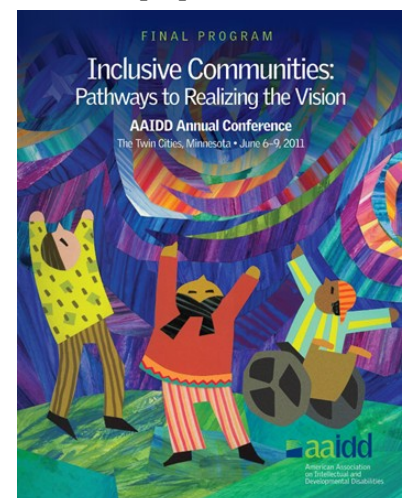
If you are interested in joining our SIG on Students and Early Career Professionals, you may sign up online when you join or renew your membership in AAIDD, or you may contact Jason Epstein jepstein@aaidd.org for more information. We look forward to hearing from you!



AAIDD 2011 Annual Conference

From June 5-8, 2011, AAIDD members and supporters gathered in St. Paul, MN to share policy, training, and research and to honor those with outstanding achievements in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities. The 2011 AAIDD Annual Conference theme was *Inclusive Communities: Pathways to Realizing the Vision* and attracted over 550 international attendees. This year's gathering was packed with activities from Monday's pre-conference meetings all the way through Thursday's post-conference meetings. Participants attended business meetings, a special media event with Rachel Simon and Dan Habib, a poster session, exhibits, breakout sessions, a federal plenary session, a river cruise, and much more. During the conference, 14 award recipients were recognized for their important professional contributions to the IDD field. The Student

and Early Career Professional Committee were also quite active this year and sponsored or participated in 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 Charlotte, NC! Don't forget to respond to the call for proposals for 2012. It is open now!



AAIDD 2011 Conference Highlights

Social Gatherings

This conference provided multiple opportunities for social gatherings. On Sunday night, the President's reception was held.

On Monday, the Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company was kind enough to host its second annual social reception for students and early career professional conference attendees. The reception was held at Great Waters Bar and Restaurant, just a few blocks from the conference hotel. Attendees enjoyed beverages and appetizers and great company. Over 40 students and early career professionals mingled and networked with each other and several senior AAIDD members and fellows.

On Tuesday, following the poster session and reception, attendees enjoyed a one-hour river cruise on the Mississippi.

On Wednesday, the SECPC hosted our annual luncheon. These gatherings of SECPC

members, students, and early career and senior professionals from a wide range of disciplines provided excellent opportunities to discuss current trends in the field, network with topic specialists and upcoming researchers, and learn more about our colleagues from around the world.



Student and Early Career Luncheon

On Wednesday (June 8th), the students and early career professional committee (SECPC) hosted a luncheon sponsored by The MENTOR Network and REM Minnesota. Fifty complimentary tickets were distributed during conference registration for this event. As in years past, AAIDD Board Members, Fellows, and AAIDD staff were invited to sit among the students and early career professionals. This provided a unique opportunity for informal collegial interactions.

This year's luncheon speaker was Dr. Elizabeth Perkins, from University of South Florida. Dr. Perkins is a Research Assistant Professor and Health Coordinator at the Florida Center for Inclusive Communities (FCIC), USF's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. She earned her PhD in Aging Studies and a BA in Psychology, both from USF. Dr. Perkins is also a RNMH, a

registered nurse from Great Britain, where she was trained specifically in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). She has held several leadership roles at both a state and national levels and currently serves as the president of AAIDD's Gerontology Division.

Dr. Perkins shared her clinical experiences in the field of geriatric and residential care in her presentation titled: "Aging: We Can't Escape it – So Why Not Embrace it?" She referenced her current areas of interest which include medical aspects of aging with IDD and quality of life issues of staff and family caregivers of adults with IDD. She spoke about how professionals should focus on peoples' abilities, remove barriers, overcome stigma and preconceived expectations for people who are aging with IDD.

Liz's presentation was very well received by attendees at the SECPC luncheon. She was quite a hit!

AAIDD 2011 Conference Highlights

Poster Session

The poster session was held Tuesday evening of the conference in conjunction with a food and beverage reception. Over 100 posters were displayed on topics across the spectrum. The SECPC had two posters on display this year. One poster was a Wordle word cloud created using descriptions or words submitted by the members of the SECPC about what committee membership means to them. The most prominent words pictured were: networking, collaboration, and leadership.



The SECPC also displayed an organizational poster which described the activities of our committees initiatives in the last year: Student and Early Career Professional Webpage, Newsletter, Webinar Series, Clearinghouse, Student Scholarship Program, Guide Program, and Committee Membership. Members of the Committee presented information from the poster to attendees, sharing ways that students and early career



members could get involved.

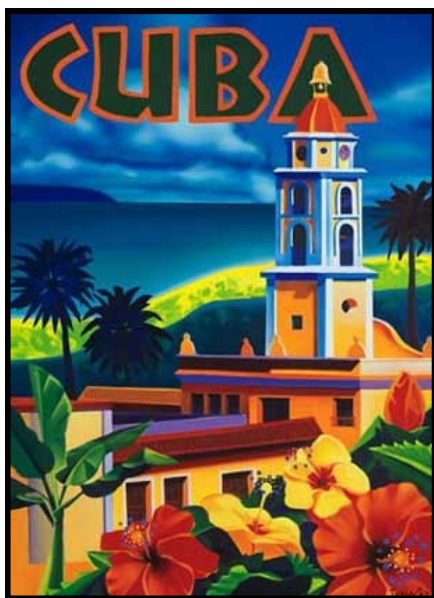
In addition to the SECPC posters presented, several committee members presented their own research, projects, and training at the session.

Photos: AAIDD members displaying their research at the annual meeting

Cuba Delegation Student Scholarship Winner

CONGRATULATIONS Kerri Nowell!

The Student and Early Career Professional Committee (SECPC) assisted AAIDD with a student scholarship opportunity for the Cuba Research Delegation scheduled in October '11. SECPC hosted a conference call in conjunction with Professionals Abroad to explain the trip and scholarship competition. Interested students were asked to submit a cover letter proving he/she meets the eligibility criteria by being enrolled in a graduate program at the time of the application and during the delegation. They were also required to submit a one-page essay describing their research interest in Cuba and plans for disseminating knowledge gained while on the research delegation. The scholarship will cover the delegate program costs of the trip.



Kerri Nowell is a school psychology doctoral student at the University of Houston (UH) in Texas. Prior to beginning her doctoral training, she worked as a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP; specialist level school psychologist) in public schools and subsequently as a clinician at Baylor College of Medicine (BCM)/Texas Children's Hospital (TCH). Kerri just completed her first year in the doctoral program at UH.

While in Cuba, Kerri plans on completing research related to service delivery models. Though the majority of her recent work has focused on assessment of children/adolescents with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) with and without co-occurring intellectual disability (ID), her primary interest centers on improving identification of ASD/ID and ensuring provisions of appropriate services in underserved populations. Because limited information is available regarding service delivery models for children with ASD in Cuba, she would like to research the types and availability of services and the process of determining eligibility for such services.

Kerri plans on submitting her findings for publication and presenting the data at various conferences focusing on service delivery for children/adolescents with disabilities. SECPC wishes her well on her trip and looks forward to hearing more about this research when she returns.

The Guide Program

Students and Early Career Professionals, have you wanted to become more involved with AAIDD? Do you have questions about how to develop your career within the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities? Have you ever wondered how to meet professionals in the I/DD field to “get your foot in the door?” Do you ever want to get the opinion of a professional who is not your academic advisor? Then this is your chance! The Guide Program may be for you.

Seasoned Professionals, do you want to ensure that the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities has strong leaders in the future? Have you ever wished that you could pass along some piece of wisdom that you had to “learn the hard way”? Do you think that student development is essential for the future of AAIDD? Have you ever known about a great opportunity and just needed someone to tell about it? Then this is your chance too. You may be a perfect match to mentor a student or early career professional through the Guide Program.

AAIDD’s Student and Early Career Professional Special Interest Group organizes the Guide Program which matches students and new members with established professionals in the field of intellectual and developmental

disabilities. The Guide Program uses your interests to pair interested individuals with the intention that all involved will benefit from this networking opportunity.

With such great benefits, one would think that a great commitment would need to be made as well. However, the commitment for the Guide Program is flexible depending upon the needs and interests of the match. The student or early career professional agrees to share information about their interests, to ask questions, and be open to ideas and opportunities. In turn, the Guide agrees to introduce the student/ECP to other AAIDD members and initiatives, to alert the student/ECP to new opportunities, and to provide encouragement. All of this and more for just a couple hours per year for two years – check it out!

Please contact Meghan Burke if you are interested in The Guide Program (Meghan.m.burke@vanderbilt.edu).



AAIDD 136th Annual Meeting
June 18-21, 2012 Charlotte, NC

Research • Practice • Policy



Save the date!

**The Student and Early
Career Professional SIG hopes to
see you there.**

Call for papers now open!

Postdoctoral Research Highlight

Hello! My name is Nancy Miodrag and I am entering my third year as a post-doctoral research fellow at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center (VKC), in Nashville Tennessee. The VKC is a Eunice Kennedy Shriver Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Center (IDDRRC) dedicated to improving the quality of life of persons with various intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Since 2009, I have had the pleasure of working with my mentors, Drs. Elisabeth Dykens and Bob Hodapp, who have made great advances to the field of behavioral and family research in I/DD. Working at the VKC has allowed me to pursue my interest in stress and coping in families of persons with genetic syndromes.

In Dr. Dykens' lab, I study within- and between-group differences in families and children with Prader-Willi syndrome (PWS) and Williams syndrome (WS). My work involves identifying factors that may influence health and well-being with specific interests in psychological stress, depression, anxiety, physical health, behaviors specific to the child's phenotype, as well as positive internal states such as optimism and coping. Interventions to help families and children address their challenges have also been a keen interest of mine. This summer, I initiated a pilot project

teaching mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques to adults with WS and ASD at our 2011 ACM Lifting Lives Music Camp. Our team collected behavioral (mood) and physiological (salivary cortisol) data to get a glimpse of how an empirically-based stress reduction intervention affects mood and stress. The response from campers was overwhelmingly positive and we look forward to studying mindfulness practice and its potential to decrease negative psychological states and increase positive ones in individuals with WS and other syndromes.

With Dr. Hodapp, I have used large-scale, linked administrative datasets (i.e., birth, death, and hospital discharge records) from the state of Tennessee to examine health and hospitalization in mothers and children with Down syndrome and spina bifida. To date, very little is known about a number of fundamental and critical issues in these families:

- Does parent-family stress contribute to health-related outcomes?
- How do children's early health and hospitalization affect parents' own health and hospitalization?
- What psychosocial and family-structure variables predict parent well-being?

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VANDERBILT KENNEDY CENTER

Postdoctoral Research Highlight continued...

Most recently, we conducted a study on early death in Down syndrome, to be published in the special issue on Death and Dying in the Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities.

Overall, I could not have asked for a better post-doctoral experience. Drs. Dykens and Hodapp have provided me with excellent conceptual, methodological, and statistical expertise, mentoring in an area of I/DD that has always intrigued me. I hope my research will work towards transcending stress-coping research by making real-world advances to the health of families of children with I/DD. It has been an absolute pleasure working with my mentors, the research team and graduate students, VKC staff, and the families who share so much of their lives with us. I look forward to another productive year.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions: nancy.miodrag@vanderbilt.edu

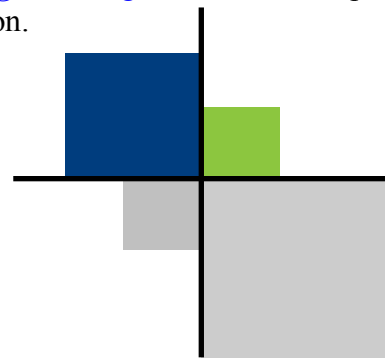


VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

SECP Committee Designated a SIG!

The Student and Early Career Professionals Committee has recently been upgraded from a ad-hoc committee of the President to a Special Interest Group (SIG). The Student and Early Career Professional SIG will be the only SIG operating without dues expectations from members in an effort to recognize the strained budgets of its members. As such our committee will seek out financial support and sponsorship for its activities. As a SIG, group membership will be open to any AAIDD members who have an interest in supporting our population but are not themselves students and early career professionals. If you are interested in joining

our SIG on Students and Early Career Professionals, you may sign up online when you join or renew your membership in AAIDD, or you may contact Jason Epstein <jepstein@aaidd.org> for membership information.



Doctoral Study Opportunity

Project LEAD: Preparing Leaders in Special Education, Access, and Data-based Decision Making in High-Need Schools

The purpose of **Project LEAD** is to prepare knowledgeable, dynamic leaders in the field of special education who have expertise in supporting students with disabilities to gain access to the general education curriculum in high-need schools. Project LEAD involves

- a) collaboration among faculty and doctoral students from the Departments of Special Education and other units in the college (i.e., Curriculum and Instruction, the Center for Education in Small Urban Communities);
- b) facilitating relationships between participants and leading researchers in the field of special education; and
- c) developing intimate linkages with high-need schools locally and in Chicago.

Project LEAD emphasizes five competency areas related to access to the general education curriculum:

- Disability law and education policy
- Improving outcomes through research and data-based decisions
- Collaborative practices between regular and special educators in inclusive environments
- Universal design for learning (UDL)
- Service learning

Doctoral Program Support

- Paid tuition
- A yearly stipend for full-time 11-month participation
- Annual stipend for conference attendance and research materials

Program Requirements

The Doctoral Program in Special Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign requires 64 credit hours beyond the master's degree. Specialization in access to the general

education curriculum will be achieved through:

- *Coursework*: existing courses and newly created Advanced Topics courses on access;
- *Participation in the LEAD Seminar*: bi-monthly meetings on research, teaching, and service issues related to educating students in high-need schools;
- *Technology*: use of videoconferencing to engage with national and state experts; opportunities to use assistive and instructional technologies that promote access; and
- *Participation in traineeships*: research, teaching, and service learning process on access in high need schools;
- *Early research and dissertation*: an early research project and dissertation focused on access to the general education curriculum in high need schools.

Traineeship Experiences

Participants in LEAD complete a 20-hour *paid* traineeship each semester that focuses on research, teaching, or personnel preparation (depending on the semester) and allows collaboration with key faculty and leaders in the special and general education communities.

Five types of traineeships are offered:

- Collaborative research experiences with the trainee's advisors on topics related to access to the general education curriculum
- Research experiences addressing access to the general education curriculum in high need schools
- Teaching experiences in university courses
- Supervision experiences with student teachers in high need schools
- Completion of a service learning project on access to the general education curriculum

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Doctoral Program Eligibility

To be eligible for the LEAD program, a doctoral student must have:

- A Master's degree in special education or a related field
- U.S. citizenship or permanent U.S. residency
- A minimum grade point average of 3.0 out of 4.0
- 2 or more years of experience with individuals with disabilities in school or community settings
- Goals consistent with the program
- A strong interest in research in the area of access to the general education curriculum

Doctoral Program Application Process

Interested applicants should submit an application to the doctoral program in Special Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign by going to the Department of Special Education website at <http://education.illinois.edu/sped/AdmissionsDoctoral.html>

For More Information Please Contact one of the Members of the LEAD Team :

Stacy K. Dymond sdymond@illinois.edu, Lisa Monda-Amaya lmonda@illinois.edu, Jan Gaffney gaffneyj@illinois.edu, or Karrie Shogren kshogren@illinois.edu
(217) 333-0260

ILLINOIS

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Leadership Institute Development Program

Applications for the University of Delaware's National Leadership Institute on Developmental Disabilities (January 22-27) will be accepted through October 28th!

This week-long, intensive leadership development program is designed for current executive-level leaders and emerging leaders. Participants may work in areas of management or program leadership in organizations that provide, advocate for, or fund supports for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families.

The focus of the Leadership Institute is on assessing and strengthening leadership skills,

setting organizational direction, and understanding the selected future of the intellectual/developmental disabilities participants field. Institute participants come away with offering demonstrated leadership ability and a firm grasp of the skills and values critical for quality, collaboration and individualized supports.

NOTE: No scholarships are available for this session. Scholarships may be available for the Summer session.

Apply now online at www.nlcdd.org. Applications are due by October 28, 2011. For questions e-mail Nancy Weiss at: nweiss@udel.edu

Call for Papers AAIDD 2012 Annual Meeting

Submission Deadline: December 2, 2011

About the Conference

The 136th AAIDD Annual Meeting, *Research*Practice*Policy*, will provide researchers, clinicians, practitioners, educators, policymakers, local, state and federal agencies, and advocates with cutting edge research, effective practices, and valuable information on important policy initiatives. The conference will have thought-provoking plenary sessions that integrate research-practice-policy, panel presentations, poster presentations, taskforce and special interest group meetings, and networking opportunities. Select pre- and post-conference workshops will address relevant topics of interest in greater detail.

Research Practice*Policy*

AAIDD has been the leading interdisciplinary professional organization in intellectual and developmental disabilities for more than a century. Our leaders and members have been at the leading edge of groundbreaking research, practices, and policies in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities. This annual meeting will continue that long-established tradition. Our plenary sessions will focus on the interdependence of research, practice, and policy toward improving the lives of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The conference will create a forum for sharing expertise in the areas of research, practice, and policy relevant to promoting improved outcomes and quality of life for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

We invite you to submit your quality proposal and come share your ideas and findings with your colleagues at the 2012 AAIDD Annual Meeting in Charlotte, NC, June 18-21, 2012.

Students and Early Career Professionals

The AAIDD Annual Meeting provides a unique opportunity to become involved in the field, develop leadership skills, and network. We encourage students and early career professionals to come present and take the opportunity of this meeting to promote their work. A limited number of student and early career professional scholarships will be available on

a competitive basis—to be considered for a scholarship, a student/early career professional must be the first author on a paper or poster proposal and indicate that they would like to be considered for a scholarship on the proposal submission form.

Proposals Sought

High quality proposals are sought that focus on one topic area or that can bridge research, practice, and policy. We strongly encourage authors of proposals that are research-only, practice-only or policy-only focused to express how they will relate their single focus to the remaining two foci (research to practice and policy, practice to research and policy, or policy to research and practice). Proposals will be competitively reviewed—not all proposals will be accepted. Due to the limited number of concurrent session slots, no individual author will be permitted to present more than two paper presentations on which s/he is first author. Also because of the limited number of paper presentation opportunities, the review panel may determine it necessary to offer a presentation format different from that initially proposed by the author(s) (e.g., poster presentation instead of paper presentation).

Proposal Formats:

- **Paper Presentation**
- **Panel Presentation**
- **Poster Presentations**
- **Pre and Post-Conference Sessions**
- **Media and Resource Presentations**

To submit a presentation, please visit the AAIDD website: http://www.aaid.org/content_5151.cfm?navID=326. For questions or problems about the submission process, please contact Maria at maria@aaid.org or 202-387-1968 ext 205.





Knowledge | Support | Empowerment

A Publication of the AAIDD Student and Early Career Professional Special Interest Group

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Judith Gross, *AAIDD 2011 Annual Conference, Poster
Sessions, Social Gatherings, and SIG
announcement*

Britt Butler, *The Guide Program*

Archived issues of SECPC Newsletter available at :
http://www.aaid.org/content_366.cfm?navID=115

About SECP SIG

The goal of the AAIDD Ad Hoc Student and Early Career Professionals (SECP) Special Interest Group (SIG) 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 SECP SIG 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. If you have an interest in supporting students and early career professionals, please contact Melissa DiSipio at MDiSipio@pmhcc.org or Judith Gross at jgross@ku.edu to learn more.

Please visit our website at:
http://www.aaid.org/content_297.cfm?navID=86

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

AAIDD offers a number of membership options with a variety of benefits depending on the level you choose. Below we will highlight three types of membership that may be affordable for students and early career professionals

AAIDD offers an International Electronic membership for members residing outside of the U.S. or Canada for \$50, which offers electronic access to both *AJIDD* and *IDD* journals. Members at this level cannot hold office or vote in AAIDD

elections.

AAIDD offers a Basic membership for \$75, which offers electronic access to *AJIDD* or *IDD* journals. Basic members are eligible to hold office and vote in AAIDD elections.

AAIDD also offers a Classic membership for \$125, which offers electronic access to both *AJIDD* and *IDD* journals. Classic members are eligible to hold office and vote in AAIDD elections.

In addition to the aforementioned benefits, members at all three levels have access to members-only web forums, delivery of electronic newsletters, and are entitled to member discounts for meeting registration, book store purchases, and job postings.

For more information on the various membership categories and to join AAIDD visit :
http://www.aaid.org/content_120.cfm