



College Autism Network News and Notes

August 2026

Summit Sampler: Some of the Programs You'll See



**COLLEGE AUTISM
SUMMIT 2026** ∞
BALTIMORE, MD // NOV. 8-11

Are you on the fence about joining us in Baltimore November 8-11? We hope the titles of some of the selected programs will entice you:

- Beyond Buzzwords: What Makes a Campus a Safe Harbor for Neurodivergent Students
- Empowering Student Leaders to Support Neurodivergent Peers
- From Campus to Career: Building Effective Partnerships That Expand Work-based Learning Opportunities
- The Largest Autistic College Student Dataset: What's Ahead for PEACES?
- Autism and Antisemitism on the College Campus: Invisible Identities and Invisible Risks

These are just five of the more than sixty programs and posters you'll be able to choose from at this year's Summit. To see the full schedule, check our website over the coming weeks as we put together an outstanding professional development opportunity for practitioners, researchers, students, employers and autism support professionals.

You can also choose a *preconference workshop* from the three we'll offer:

Newsletter Highlights

Summit Sampler: A Lot to Look Forward to!

Nominate an Outstanding Emerging Professional

Yee-ha! Someone Gave Us an Award

CAN founder Brad Cox Featured in Inside Higher Ed

Open Your Calendar! Upcoming CANVAS Schedule and August Presenter

CANVAS Library Now Available on Youtube

CAN Consultants' Collective Member of the Month: John Caldora

Landmark College Offers Online Courses

SkillFlix: Great Training Videos Now Available - Free for CAN Members

Interesting Thing(s) from Around the Internet



- Program Leaders' Collaborative: Excellence in Program Evaluation

- Building Blocks for New and Emerging Programs
- The Summit Student Experience (for graduate and undergraduate students hoping to enter the field of autism/ND support)

More details about these can be found [on our website](#). We hope to see you in Baltimore!

[Register here!](#)

CAN Announces Our New Award for Emerging Professionals



Nothing makes us happier than celebrating excellent work. Well, okay, maybe ice cream makes us a little happier, but giving out awards is a close second. We're excited to announce a new award, to be given at the College Autism Summit (see above). The **Promising Professionals in College Autism Support Award** recognizes and encourages the field's future leaders, up to three individuals who have demonstrated early in their career a capacity for broad thinking, collaborative effort and excellent skills, all built on a foundation of ongoing learning and professional development.

Recipients will have demonstrated:

- A capacity to consider their work in a broader national context;
- The ability to connect across campus and beyond, building alliances that support this work;
- Excellent workplace skills that have improved their organization, program, or institution;

- An ongoing commitment to professional development in this field.

Nominees:

- Should be emerging professionals with four or fewer years' of professional experience supporting autistic college students;
- Should have at least a bachelor's degree prior to professional work;
- Should be in a role that primarily, though not necessarily exclusively, works with autistic college students. This may be on campus or with an organization or business, as a consultant/advocate, or a combination of these.

Nominations may be made by supervisors, colleagues or the nominee. Up to three letters of support are welcome, but not required. *The deadline is September 1.*

Recipients will receive a 50 percent discount on a Summit member registration. To nominate an individual, please use this [Google Form](#), which allows letters of support to be attached.

CAN Receives AHEAD's Meritorious Contribution Award



Speaking of awards, we won one! At this year's AHEAD Annual Conference, CAN was recognized as the recipient of the **AHEAD Honor for Meritorious Contribution**. Here's some of what they said about us: "From its inception in 2016, CAN was launched with a clear and innovative three-part mission—research, training, and advocacy—explicitly designed to address the full trajectory of the college experience. CAN's framing of support across three phases—moving in, moving through, and moving on—has shaped how institutions conceptualize and implement autism-specific support in higher education. By centering autistic voices, removing financial and informational barriers, and cultivating a national ecosystem of practitioners and researchers, CAN has fundamentally advanced access to higher education for autistic students."

They gave us a very nice plaque (always a challenge for a fully-remote organization) and a big round of applause. In the ten-year history of CAN, this was a *really* nice moment, right up there with the therapy dogs who came to the 2025 Summit. Thank you, AHEAD, for this recognition! We're very honored.

CAN Founder Brad Cox Featured in Inside Higher Ed



What has our founder, Dr. Brad Cox, been up to?

[Read all about his work](#) trying to do an important, but very challenging thing: give an accurate count of the number of autistic students enrolled in college.

TLDR: It's a lot of students. The actual study is cited in the article, and we encourage you to familiarize yourself with it so you too can answer the frequent question: Just how many autistic students are in college?

CANVAS Kicks off Another Year of Research Presentations



Join us on Tuesday, August 11 at 12 pm ET to hear from Jess Monahan, Ph.D. (Assistant Research Professor, University of Maryland, College Park) present on *Autistic College Students and Disclosure: Understanding Student Experiences and Factors Contributing to Decision Making*

In this session, they will explore the complexity surrounding autistic college students and their decision to disclose their autistic identity. They will review the most current literature in the field, with a focus on a study conducted by Michaela Hodges-Fulton and Dr. Monahan. The presentation will wrap with thoughts on how we best support students in this decision-making process. Interested in attending? Please email [Brett Nachman](mailto:Brett.Nachman@umaryland.edu)

Other CANVAS Dates for your Calendar



In addition to our August CANVAS presentation, please check out our additional scheduled presenters below!

Thursday, September 10 at 11 am ET

Dr. Hun Baum Lee (Associate Professor of Research, University of Texas San Antonio) and Dr. Humberto Peña, Jr. (Assistant Professor, University of Texas San Antonio) will present on *Integrating Chatbots: Supporting the College Transition for Autistic Students in Texas*

Thursday, October 15 at 12 pm ET

Dr. Yinghui Xia (Education Research, Lancaster University) and Dr. Peng Wang (Joint International Research Unit on Neuroplasticity, CERVO Brain Research Centre, Laval University) will present on *The Impact of Video-based Intervention for Improving Attitudes Towards Autism in Chinese Higher Education: A Pre-post Study.*

Tues, November 17 at 1 pm ET

Presenters: To Be Announced!
So You're Developing a Dissertation on Autism and Higher Education - What Now?

If you're not already on the CANVAS listserv, email [Brett Nachman](#) to be added. That's how you'll get reminders and session links. We also post the next presentation here in our newsletter.

CANVAS Library now Available on Youtube



Every month for the past seven years, we've offered a research presentation under the umbrella of CANVAS (CAN Virtual Association of Scholars). These presentations are offered by scholars around the world. We've collected 58 of them in an open-access, easy-to-use [YouTube Playlist](#). We hope these are helpful to practitioners and researchers alike.

CAN Consultants' Collective Member of the Month: John Caldora



Each month we'll tell you a bit about our Collective of stellar consultants available for a variety of supports for your program or institution. When you engage one of our consultants, it's a win-win-win. You get excellent consultation, our consultant shares their knowledge and experience for a very reasonable fee (negotiated individually with the institution), and CAN receives a portion of the fee to help support our outreach to other groups and institutions. This month's featured consultant is John Caldora.

John Caldora is an autistic higher education professional with fifteen years of experience instructing institutions in best practices for supporting autistic students. He started his presentations as a Resident Advisor at George Mason University in 2011, and presented a Disability KC Sponsored Presentation at NASPA 2012. In the years since, John has led the field in effective methods of supporting autistic students in residence life, case management, student conduct, and disability services. He has provided training to institutions across the country, focused on providing easy-to-access-and-implement tools that have a positive impact on all students, but an outsized impact on neurodivergent students. John is active in CAN, serving as vice-chair of the CAN Board of Directors, a reviewer for the Autism Inclusive Campus Designation Pilot and a long-time member of the Summit planning committee. John is the Assistant Director for Accessibility Services at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth College and a PhD student at the University of Maine. His current passion is improving support for autistic students in clinical education.

Interested in engaging John or one of the other members of our Consultants' Collective? Contact [Matt Segall](#), coordinator or visit our [website](#).

Landmark College Offers Online Courses



August 16 is the application deadline for fall courses 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. The certificate program draws an engaged group of educators, counselors, disability services professionals, parents, and neurodiversity advocates.

Fall courses running September 11 – November 8 are:

- "Understanding and Supporting Diverse Learners"
- "Leveraging Universal Design and Learning Technologies for Student Success".

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

Introducing SkillFlix AYA



The College Autism Network has partnered with SkillFlix to bring CAN members a curated resource library designed specifically for autistic young adults and the staff who support them in higher education and autism-specific programs.

SkillFlix AYA is a video library of 150+ Microskills® videos

supporting autistic young adults in developing communication and relationship-focused skills at their own pace. The "CAN Member AYA Playlist" includes 10 SkillFlix videos designed specifically to support autistic young adults to *build career readiness skills and feel more confident navigating relationships* - available exclusively to CAN members at no cost. These videos value a neurodiversity-affirming approach. There are several characters that show autistic young adults navigating conversations and common situations using specific skills and strategies.

We hope these videos offer neurodivergent people a menu of skills to pull from based on their individual needs and capacity to manage different types of social interactions. We include resources such as written information and useful links, to help you build knowledge and understanding to apply the skills steps across various situations.

We hope that these videos can help folks meet their goals and communicate with confidence. For more information and to access the videos, [visit our website](#).

Interesting Things From Around the Internet

Nature ran this [interesting article](#) from the journal *Translational Psychiatry* about research on the relationship between autism and social anxiety. If you're interested in some of the biological "phenotypes" of autism, or just like to throw around the word "amygdala," you'll want to read this.

CAN's 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 3000 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 by the [Frist Center for Autism and Innovation](#) at Vanderbilt University.



Try email marketing for free today!