

AUGUST 2024



Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

News Brief

Welcome



Sheryl Sandvoss
Technical Assistance Coordinator

Sheryl Sandvoss joined the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities in June as the newest technical assistance coordinator, working with state colleges, universities, and technical colleges to develop and implement Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs (FPCTPs).

Previously, Sandvoss was the secondary ESE coordinator in Volusia County. She served as the state director for the Florida Inclusion Network, a special education director in the Florida Department of Corrections and worked with the Florida Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Education in both program development and compliance. Sandvoss earned her undergraduate degree in special education and her master's degree in educational leadership from Florida State University.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Academy of Community Inclusion Florida Atlantic University

Strategies for Student Support and
Success in Inclusive Classrooms



Gwendolyn Carey
Program Director

Nationwide, there are over 300 college programs for students with ID, with more than 30 in Florida (Think College, 2024; FCSUA 2024). Research supports the benefits of an inclusive college education for everyone with or without disabilities (Gilson et al., 2020). Reported benefits, both for students with and without disabilities, involve positive classroom climates, willingness to interact with others, and an increased acceptance of diverse learners (Jones & Goble, 2012).

Students enrolled at Florida Atlantic University's (FAU) Academy for Community Inclusion (ACI) take credit bearing courses in a variety of settings. Several strategies have proven helpful to increase success for students with intellectual disability (ID) in their inclusive courses.

[Continue reading here...](#)

STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

2024 FLPEPPI Student Panelists

These extraordinary women shared their stories and experiences during the 2024 Florida Postsecondary Education Program Planning Institute as a part of the 2024 Student Panel. Their messages of perseverance, determination and self-confidence left the audience inspired and motivated to see more students complete programs with their own stories of success.



Deena Chachkas, Florida Atlantic University

Deena Chachkas is a 2024 graduate from the Academy for Community Inclusion at Florida Atlantic University. Chachkas was educated in information technology, independent living skills and CPR & First-Aid skills. She currently works at Sea Turtle Adventures in Boynton Beach as a certified, Florida Fish and Wildlife-licensed sea turtle monitor. She has also worked with iCARES, an organization affiliated with Sea Turtles Conservation Inc. that works with adults with special needs.



Olivia Gaspard, Indian River State College

Olivia Lynn Gaspard is a 2023 graduate from Project STAGE at Indian River State College. Gaspard was originally born in Haiti. At the age of two, she was adopted and moved to the United States. As a child, she enjoyed staying active and participated in gymnastics and track and field. Gaspard has always had a passion to work with children, to help them learn and discover the world around them. This led her to Project STAGE, where she graduated with a credential in Early Childhood Education.



Salena Montalvo, Okaloosa Technical College

Salena Montalvo is a 2023 graduate from the Okaloosa UP program at Okaloosa Technical College. Montalvo graduated with a credential in the Culinary Arts program. Montalvo was one of the first students enrolled in the program and is a proud member of the inaugural graduation class. She previously worked in hospitality at the Hilton Garden Inn on Okaloosa Island and currently has been promoted to a position in the kitchen.

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2024 Florida Postsecondary Education Program Planning Institute Photo Gallery



Disability Employment Awareness Month

“Tell Your Story” Contest

In advance of Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) in October, The Able Trust is launching the DEAM “Tell Your Story” Contest! The Able Trust is looking for students with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, and adult VR consumers to share their educational and employment experiences. The winner will receive a **\$50 digital gift card** and will be chosen randomly from all eligible entries in each category! **Submissions are due by Friday, September 13.**



TELL YOUR STORY

Disability Employment Awareness Month 2024

Are you a:

- Student?
- Parent or guardian?
- Adult VR client?



Enter The Able Trust’s DEAM Tell Your Story contest and tell us about your education and employment experiences for a chance to win a **\$50 digital gift card!**

SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY BY SEPTEMBER 13!

www.abletrust.org/deam-tell-your-story-contest

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Professional Development Opportunities

Read, Attend, Present



Brady Bulletin is a research-to-practice bulletin for programs to support meaningful postsecondary comprehensive transition programs. This research bulletin is created by the Academy for Community Inclusion at Florida Atlantic University. Visit [FCSUA's website](#) to read the current issue.



ASSOCIATION FOR
CAREER & TECHNICAL
EDUCATION®

Best Practices and Innovations Conference

Portland, OR

October 9-11



**Council for
Exceptional
Children**

2024 Annual FCEC Conference

Gainesville, FL

October 9-12



Upcoming FCUSA Informational Webinars:

- **Sept 3:** Spreading the News: Resources Available for Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) & Disability History Month
- **Oct. 1:** Making the Connection with Businesses to Get Students Hired



DCDT International

Conference

Chantilly, VA

October 16-19



2024 State of the Art Conference

Chapel Hill, NC

October 29-30

Email Us

We'd love to hear from you on what is happening at your institution. Please send stories and photos to fcsua@ucf.edu, ATTN: FCSUA News Brief.

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