



DR. RACHEL KALLEM WHITMAN

(she/her)

Curriculum vitae

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Dr. Rachel Kallem Whitman graduated from Duquesne University with her doctorate in Educational Leadership with a focus in disability studies. Rachel earned her M.S.Ed. in Community Mental Health/Special Education Support from Duquesne University and a B.A. in psychology from the University of Virginia. Rachel has worked in public school systems as a special education advocate, in higher education as a disability services coordinator, and as a curriculum developer and mentor for youth with disabilities at a hospital. Currently, Rachel is an adjunct professor at Duquesne University, where she teaches courses in disability studies.

Rachel is a content expert who has been consulted on various disability initiatives led by organizations serving the disabled community, as well as an experienced public speaker who has presented at schools, colleges, foundations, and nonprofits about challenging ableism (discrimination in favor of nondisabled people) and sanism (discrimination in favor of neurotypical people); interpreting disability as a social justice issue anchored in ensuring access, normalizing interdependence, and recognizing the impact of intersectionality; and addressing the moral imperative of intentionally including diverse brains and bodies in everyday life. In addition, Rachel uses these opportunities to engage audiences in conversations about celebrating disability as a source of pride, identity, community, and culture.

Rachel is an avid writer who has published articles, short stories, poems, and essays about the societal barriers and biases that marginalize the experience of living with a disability. In addition, Rachel, a self-advocate living with bipolar disorder, is the author of *Instability in Six Colors*, a memoir that paints a vivid picture of what it is like living with chronic mental illness, trauma, and a complicated relationship with sanity, suicide, and self-love.

Through her personal advocacy, professional activism, and practice of allyship, Rachel's work creates safe spaces where authentic disability narratives are amplified, hope is kindled, and community is cultivated. Rachel's work has garnered acclaim locally in Pittsburgh, across the country, and internationally.

Education

- May 2017 Ed.D., Educational Leadership
Duquesne University; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Dissertation title: Perceptions of Disability, Identity, Agency, Goal Attainment, and Young Adult Disability Programs
Committee: Dr. Rick McCown (chair), Dr. Connie Moss, Dr. Liz Miller
- 2011 M.S.Ed., Community Mental Health/Special Education Support
Duquesne University; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- 2007 B.A., Psychology
University of Virginia; Charlottesville, Virginia

Professional Experience

- Jan. 2017 – Current **Adjunct faculty member in Duquesne University’s Psychology Department**; Specializing in courses on disability, ableism, and marginalized narratives (see “Teaching Experience” for detailed descriptions)
- May – July 2017 **Consultant with Duquesne University’s Palumbo Donahue School of Business**; Developed a curriculum to teach master’s level students how to reinforce equitable hiring practices and create a supportive and empowering office culture for employees with disabilities
- Dec. 2014 – Nov. 2015 **Youth Leadership Coordinator at the Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh**; Developed inclusive youth leadership and youth development opportunities for young adults with a variety of disabilities; Created training materials and presented information on disability competencies during medical resident orientation at the Adolescent and Young Adult Clinic; Facilitated collaborative partnerships across non-profit agencies, service providers, educational environments, and medical systems to optimize service delivery and improve systems of care; Worked closely with a multitude of stakeholders with a particular emphasis on youth and their families
- Sept. 2011 – May 2014 **Disability Services Coordinator at La Roche University**; Reviewed disability related documentation to create individualized Student Accommodation Letters outlining academic supports for students with disabilities; Collaborated with students, staff, faculty, and parents to support an optimal learning environment and a community where student needs were communicated openly and appropriately addressed; Designed forms, application procedures, satisfaction surveys, and a disability discrimination grievance procedure to streamline the delivery of student services and promote equitable treatment; Remained current on legislation pertaining to disability rights, entitlements, and eligibility (Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, etc.); Developed a student advocacy workgroup designed to enhance student self-empowerment through boosting academic confidence and relationship skill building; Coordinated and facilitated interactive workshops on career readiness, assistive technology, and academic skills

July 2010 – August 2011 **Education Advocate at Mental Health America Allegheny County;** Educated youth with mental health issues and their families about their rights and eligibility for services through special education legislation; Assisted youth and their families with securing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 Plans; Attended IEP and 504 Plan meetings with families to provide support and assistance with advocating for appropriate accommodations; Educated parents and providers on elements of special education through presentations; Remained current on legislation pertaining to disability rights, entitlements, and eligibility (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, No Child Left Behind, etc.)

July 2009 – July 2010 **Adult Mental Health Advocate at Mental Health America Allegheny County;** Supported adults on inpatient commitments by developing their advocacy skills, specifically in relation to discharge planning and quality of life issues; Mediated discussions between adults with mental illnesses and their treatment providers; Presented to provider and consumer audiences on topics such as the Disability Rights Movement, the Recovery-Resiliency Model, and person-centered planning

Fellowships

January – May 2016 **Writing Fellow at Creative Nonfiction - Writing Away the Stigma Fellowship;** Participant in a funded editorial internship designed to demonstrate how true stories can help counteract the dangerous and shameful stigma surrounding mental illness

Sept. – Dec. 2014 **Program Fellow at the FISA Foundation;** Conducted qualitative and quantitative research on topics related to FISA's strategic priorities; Created reports and presentations on issues that impact women, girls, and individuals with disabilities; Supported FISA staff and board members in implementing projects and events; Attended relevant site visits, grantee meetings, board meetings, and other events

Aug. – Nov. 2014 **Education Fellow at the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities and Related Disorders (LEND) Center at the University of Pittsburgh;** Funded trainee in a dynamic interdisciplinary leadership training program designed to forge partnerships between clinicians, practitioners, professionals, and across systems in order to work collaboratively with stakeholders and improve the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families

Teaching Experience: Duquesne University

Introduction to Psychology: PSYC 101

Psychology of Social and Cultural Diversity: PSYC 354; Developed by Kallem Whitman. This course aims to deepen our understanding of cultural diversity from a psychological standpoint at the individual, interpersonal, and societal levels. Students will consider several basic questions, including: What is the significance of cultural diversity in the field of psychology? How do differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, religiosity, and social class intersect and influence the ways in which human beings construct our identities? And how do our cultural differences shape our unique worldviews, as well as that of others?

Perspectives on Disability and Illness: PSYC 324; Developed by Kallem Whitman. What does it mean to be healthy? How do we measure sickness? Throughout history and across cultures how have the concepts of “illness” and “disability” changed? This course unpacks how we understand disability and illness--not just as simple diagnoses--but rather as conditions that have historical, legal, cultural, attitudinal, and global implications. In this class we navigate the complexities of disability and illness using different voices and perspective as our tour guides. Through interactive projects and class discussions we have the opportunity to teach each other, develop identities as allies, and analyze how ableism is a matter of social justice. Ultimately this class asks, when it comes to Perspectives on Disability and Illness, what do you think?

Psychology and Social Engagement – Unpacking Ableism: PSYC 480; Developed by Kallem Whitman. This course focuses on unpacking disability oppression, also known as ableism, and providing students learning experiences and resources so they can cultivate a better understanding of "disability" as a way life is experienced and impacted due to social determinants of health. By exploring the social model of disability, engaging with stakeholders who have disabilities, and partnering with disability serving agencies across Pittsburgh, students are able to recognize and challenge attitudinal barriers, systemic inequities, and discuss the concept of access as a human right. Through the sharing of diverse narratives and critical self-reflection, students forge an advanced understanding of disability as an identity, a community, and as a culture, not just as a diagnosis.

Presentations and Publications

Keynotes

- October 2022 The University of Wisconsin's launch of The McBurney Disability Resource Center, keynote: *"Disabled People Were the First Quiet Quitters: Exploiting ableist expectations and quitting because of disabled reality - in style,"* Madison, WI
- March 2022 The University of Pittsburgh's 2022 Mentoring and Advising Summit, plenary session keynote: *"Mentorship 101: You Are Not Your Disability,"* Virtual
- November 2019 Google Pittsburgh's Accessibility Week, keynote: *"Disability in the Steel City: Hey Yinz, Let's Make Space for Diverse Brains and Bodies!"* Pittsburgh, PA
- April 2013 The Children's Hospital Advisory Network for Guidance and Empowerment (CHANGE) Conference for the University of Pittsburgh and the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, keynote: *"Supporting and Empowering Transition age Youth with Disabilities,"* Pittsburgh, PA
- August 2012 Via Hope, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and Mental Health America Conference, keynote: *"Mental Illness, Success, and Identity,"* Austin, TX

Lectures and Trainings

- March 2023 *"Disability in the Steel City: Hey yinz, let's learn how to make space for diverse brains and bodies!"* featured presenter discussing the need to unpack ableism and explore how disability is an individualized, intersectional experience that is impacted by social determinants of health, systems of oppression, and cultural beliefs about identity and ability for the Allegheny Intermediate Unit's Pittsburgh Regional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Educators Conference
- May 2022 *"Instability in Six Colors,"* book reading for Pittsburgh's Festival of Books, an event dedicated to paying tribute to Pittsburgh's rich literary community and love of reading featuring over thirty nationally renowned authors with ties to Pittsburgh
- March 2022 *"Unpacking Ableism: A Facilitated Discussion on Including Disability Rights Issues in the Work of Pittsburgh's Foundations"* lecturer and facilitator leading a conversation on challenging ableism, framing disability rights as human rights, and the moral imperative of intentionally including diverse brains and bodies in everyday life organized by the FISA Foundation, Virtual
- February 2022 *"Unpacking Ableism"* guest lecturer on access, inclusion, human rights, and understanding ableism as a social justice issue for the American Ethical Union, Virtual

- April 2021 *“Disability as an Identity, Community, and Culture”* guest lecturer examining how the social model of disability frames disability not as a medical diagnosis, a stereotyped status, or a lesser identity but as a way life is experienced for the University of Pittsburgh’s Psychology and Sociology of Disability undergraduate course, Virtual
- November 2020 *“Instability in Six Colors: A Conversation about Mental Health”* guest lecturer and dialogue facilitator for a discussion on how mental health and illness impact women and other underrepresented communities for Robert Morris University’s Women's Leadership and Mentorship Program Book Club, Virtual
- November 2020 *“Disability in the Steel City: Hey Yinz, Let’s Make Space for Diverse Brains and Bodies!”* guest lecturer on the criticality of addressing different schematic models of disability vs. ability, ableism, and cultural interpretations of disability as a matter of social justice for The Pittsburgh Foundation, Pittsburgh, PA
- October 2020 *“Unpacking Ableism”* guest lecturer on the criticality of addressing different schematic models of disability vs. ability, ableism, and cultural interpretations of disability as a matter of social justice for FISA Foundation’s Education and Engagement Luncheon for Executive Directors at local Foundations, Pittsburgh, PA
- August 2020 *“Mindful Connections™ for Bias Awareness”* curriculum developer with a focus on addressing ableism for Awaken Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
- July 2019 *“Unpacking Madness and Fatness: Cure and Control vs. Autonomy and Freedom”* guest lecturer on the complexities of physical and mental health from a political, moral, and human rights perspective for Inside Our Minds, Pittsburgh, PA
- September 2018 *“Unpacking Ableism”* guest lecturer on the criticality of addressing different schematic models of disability vs. ability, ableism, and cultural interpretations of disability as a matter of social justice for the AmeriCorps Program, Pittsburgh, PA
- July 2017 - Current *“Career Counseling and Disability”* guest lecturer on the criticality of understanding the disability experience in order to inform authentic career counseling objectives for California University of Pennsylvania’s Career Counseling 786 master’s level course, Virtual
- June 2017 *“Lithium and Laughter Go Great Together”* guest speaker discussing mental illness, stigma, and the power of advocacy at the Washington Ethical Society, Washington, DC

- January 2017 *“Disability Rights Under the Trump Administration”* speaker on disability rights at Pittsburgh’s Woman March, a rally dedicated to champion human rights, women’s rights, and justice. This speech examined how disability is understood and misunderstood in our pervasively ableist society and the subsequent serious consequences. This event was attended by approximately 25,000 people, Pittsburgh, PA
- February 2016 *“Understanding Disability”* co-organizer and presenter at a workshop addressing different schematic models of disability vs. ability, ableism, and cultural interpretations of disability for the AmeriCorps Program Pittsburgh, PA
- January 2016 *“Student and Family Transition Series”* presentation on the intersection of disability and identity for Fox Chapel High School, Pittsburgh, PA
- April 2015 *“Disability and Our Society: Stigma, Support, and Success”* presentation on how mental illness and disability can impact middle and high school students when equipped with the right skillset for Commonwealth Connections Academy, Virtual
- March 2015 *“Mental Illness in Faith Based Communities: Understanding, Supporting, and Including Followers with Mental Health Issues”* presentation on stigma, accessibility, and inclusion for the First Presbyterian Church, Tupelo, MS
- March 2015 *“Making Transition Happen: Dream, Believe, and Achieve”* presenter on accommodations in higher education for the 2014-2015 Pennsylvania Community of Practice Series, Virtual
- Sept. 2014 – Current *“Close Encounters with Disability”* speaker on the intersection of disability and professional identity for the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
- October 2013 *“ReelAbilities Film Festival”* speaker on representation of mental illness and disability for the ReelAbilities Pittsburgh Disabilities Film Festival hosted by JFilm and the FISA Foundation, Pittsburgh, PA
- October 2010 *“It’s Now or Never! Learning to Thrive with Mental Illness”* presentation on understanding and accepting mental illness and how disability advocacy challenges stigma and empowers the individual for Value Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania’s “4th Annual Practical Possibilities for Impossible Problems: A Forum for Families with Children in HealthChoices” Family Forum, Pittsburgh, PA
- January 2013 *“Mental Illness Recovery Workshop and Resilience Training”* organizer and presenter for Allegheny County Human Services, Pittsburgh, PA

Panels

- October 2021 *“Mental Health Policy Panel”* panelist for a conversation addressing the impact of COVID on the mental health of all sectors in society—including the need for increased suicide prevention and affordable mental health and drug and alcohol treatment programs for the Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership Summit, Virtual
- September 2021 *“Disability Engagement: Personal Perspectives”* panelist for a conversation addressing how to create inclusive spaces for individuals with disabilities when developing community engagement strategies, disability legislation, advocacy initiatives, and how to form culturally competent collaborative partnerships with individuals with disabilities for The University of Pittsburgh’s School of Medicine and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials’ Disability and Health Equity Workshop, Virtual
- December 2020 *“No Longer Locked Away: Amplifying the Voices, Visibility and Legacy of Individuals with Mental Illness”* panel facilitator for a discussion on the power of social media in regard to representation and visibility in mental health advocacy for The Western Pennsylvania Disability History and Action Consortium, Virtual
- November 2020 *“Intersectionality of Identities: Closing the Gap on Healthcare Disparities”* panelist for the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center’s (UPMC) Center for Engagement and Inclusion, the Disability Resource Center, the UPMC Health Plan, the Western Psychiatric Hospital, and members of the UPMC ENABLED Network Employee Resource Group Townhall, Virtual
- October 2020 *“Dismantling Bias that Lives in Us All”* panelist for a conversation on Awaken Pittsburgh’s Mindful Connections™ for Bias Awareness curriculum for Upswell’s 2020 Conference, Virtual
- November 2016 *“Change Agents in Education – Students Working for Social Justice”* panelist for a conversation addressing mental health stigma in Pittsburgh Public Schools for The Pittsburgh Foundation’s Change Agents in Education initiative, Pittsburgh, PA
- November 2016 *“Adulting with Alumnae”* panelist for a conversation on how to successfully navigate adult life post college graduation for Greek Life Organizations at the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
- October 2019 *“Health for Everybody”* panelist for a conversation on unpacking health as a social construct, exploring health as a human rights issue, and emphasizing the need to use an intersectional lens and a background of social justice when creating health interventions for The Wild Rose Collective’s Wellness Disrupters Conference, Pittsburgh, PA

March 2016 *“Your Papers are Due at 3:00; My Panic Attack is at 4:00: Mental Illness in the Academy”* panelist for a conversation exploring how academics forge safe spaces for students to “come out” about their disabilities but academics have yet to claim their own rhetoricity and create their own safe spaces for expressing their disabilities the Northeast Modern Language Association Convention, Hartford, CT

November 2014 *“Wanna Take a #Selfie?”* panelist for a conversation on optimizing self-advocacy, self-determination, self-awareness, and self-acceptance through youth-led and youth-directed programming for the Association of University Centers on Disability Conference, Washington, D.C.

Interviews

May 2023 Interviewed for the Disability Matters podcast hosted by Bender Consulting Services, which focuses on the employment and empowerment of people with disabilities; discussed living with a mental illness and my memoir, “Instability in Six Colors”

April 2023 Interviewer for All Abilities Media’s event, “Who Cares: Stories from the World of Direct Support”; discussed the dire shortage of people who work in direct care to support individuals with intellectual disabilities

July 2020 Interviewed for A Valid Podcast’s episode *“Body, Mind and Spirit: Where Does Disability Fit?”* For their Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at 30: Accessibility in Pittsburgh initiative; discussed my relationship with mental illness and religion

May 2020 Interviewed for Public Source’s *“Stories for a Better Pittsburgh: Mental Health Awareness: These Pittsburghers Share the Importance of Supporting Themselves and Others in this Pandemic”* article; discussed the necessity of agency, safety, and self-care during the pandemic and periods of isolation

August 2019 Interviewed for the *Heinz Endowments’ Disability, Inclusion, and Access Initiative* kickoff event; discussed the moral responsibility that foundations have to serve as allies in the pursuit of disability rights

January 2018 Interviewed for Pittsburgh’s WQED award winning documentary titled *“Ink & Image: Tattoos that Heal”* featuring individuals who acquire tattoos for therapeutic reasons; shared my personal narrative of living with mental illness and the healing power of body modification

November 2016 Interviewed for Medical News Today’s article *“Bipolar Disorder: What is Rapid Cycling”* to provide a first-person perspective on what it is like living with bipolar disorder. The primary objective of this piece was to educate others living with mental illness as well as clinicians about the importance of comprehensive, consumer driven care

September 2016 Interviewed for Wordgathering’s September issue on mental health, blogging, and self-care. Wordgathering is an online quarterly journal of disability poetry, literature, and art dedicated to providing a venue where the new work of writers with disabilities can be found and to building a corpus of work for those interested in disability literature

May 2016 Interviewed for an academic research article, “*Sleeping While Disabled, Disabled While Sleeping*” authored by Dr. Benjamin Reiss at Emory University, for *Sleep Health: Journal of the National Sleep Foundation*; provided first-person perspective on the nuanced relationship between mental illness and sleep

August 2015 Interviewed for *Allegheny County’s Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 25th Anniversary Awareness Campaign* that was published in the Pittsburgh Post Gazette

Podcasts

July 2021 Guest speaker on Pandemic Pedagogy, a podcast that explores educational practice during the COVID era; “*How to Make Caring Creative: Attendance Animals, My Little Ponies, and PSYC 101*” episode eight

April 2020 – April 2023 Co-analyst for Unabridged Press’ A Valid Podcast, a podcast in which people with disabilities share humor, analysis, news, and information about their lives and the disability community at large

Publications

September 2021 “*How a gift from a stranger helped kickstart my mental health recovery*” published by the Pittsburgh City Paper and Public Source, the only nonprofit digital-first news organization that lives up to its mission of delivering public-service reporting and analysis in the Pittsburgh region

May 2021 “You have people here to help you, people like me”; Bickerstaff J., Karim S., Kallem Whitman R., Cypher A., Wiener S., Radovic, A. (2021) A Qualitative Analysis of a Blogging Intervention for Adolescents and Young Adults with Depression or Anxiety. *Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science*

July 2020 “*PTSD Made Wearing a Mask Feel Impossible – Until Today*” published by The Mighty, an online publication that provides support, community, resources, and an outlet for individuals with disabilities and their families

October 2020 “*My Therapist’s ‘Silly’ Method to Diffuse a Panic Attack*” published by The Mighty, an online publication that provides support, community, resources, and an outlet for individuals with disabilities and their families

- October 2020 *“Medication Helped Me Figure Out Who I Was”* published by Kindred, an online publication whose mission is to make women feel seen and supported through sharing stories from women around the world
- August 2020 *“Have Eating Disorder, Will Travel”* published by Groupport: Online Group Therapy support system
- May 2020 *“Manic Benders and Government Contracts”* published by To Write Love on Her Arms (TWLOHA), a non-profit movement dedicated to presenting hope and finding help for people struggling with depression, addiction, self-injury, and suicide. TWLOHA exists to encourage, inform, inspire, and also to invest directly into treatment and recovery
- February 2020 *“Instability in Six Colors”* author of a bipolar memoir, published by One Idea Press, Pittsburgh, PA
- December 2019 *“Because That’s What You Do”* published by the National Resources for Advocacy, Independence, Self-determination and Employment (RAISE) Technical Assistance Center. RAISE works with the seven Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA)-funded Parent Training and Information Centers to develop and disseminate information and resources that increase their capacity to serve youth and young adults with disabilities and their families
- May 2019 *“I Don’t Thank my Bipolar for Anything, Not a Single Thing”* published by To Write Love on Her Arms (TWLOHA), a non-profit movement dedicated to presenting hope and finding help for people struggling with depression, addiction, self-injury, and suicide. TWLOHA exists to encourage, inform, inspire, and also to invest directly into treatment and recovery
 June 2017
“My Voice” published by Wordgathering, an online quarterly journal of disability poetry, literature, and art dedicated to providing a venue where the new work of writers with disabilities can be found and to building a corpus of work for those interested in disability literature
- March 2017 *“A Message to My Meds”* published by Futura (www.corriere.it/futura) a newsletter aimed at millennials and dedicated to examining identity issues such as politics, race, relationship, gender, parenting, and being an adult. Futura is a premium content for Corriere della Sera, Italy’s main newspaper. They have an audience of approximately 14,000 people
- September 2016 *“Explaining My Injuries”* published by Let’s Think Again PA - What Are You Thinking?: An initiative designed to fight stigma by addressing attitudinal barriers
- June 2016 *“The Night My Cat Told Me to Kill Myself”* published by Wordgathering, an online quarterly journal of disability poetry, literature, and art dedicated to providing a venue where the new work of writers with disabilities can be found and to building a corpus of work for those interested in disability literature
- May 2016 *“You Are So Quirky”* published by the Trib Live to recognize National Mental Health Month

- December 2015 *“The Difference Between a Broken Leg and an Injured Mind”* published by The Mighty, an online publication that provides support, community, resources, and an outlet for individuals with disabilities and their families
- November 2015 *“secretly hypo/manic”* published by Harvard University’s *Different Lenses One Vision* (dLOV) Conference which brings together diverse advocates who tackle the experience of "otherness" in our dominant culture

Community Engagement Projects and Initiatives

- May-August 2023 Consultant for *“ReelAbilities Film Festival,”* Pittsburgh’s disability film festival that promotes awareness and appreciation of the lives, stories, and artistic expressions of individuals with disabilities hosted by Film Pittsburgh
- June 2022 – Aug. 2022 Consultant for Unabridged Press, All Abilities Media, and Point Park University’s Center for Media Innovation’s documentary on filicide (in progress); These organizations collaborate to revise and rewrite how disability narratives are shared in the media by centering and amplifying the voices of disability advocates, activists, and allies
- June 2022 Content contributor for trigger warnings and mental health resources for *“Pittsburgh Live/Ability: Encounters in Poetry and Prose!”* in partnership with the City of Asylum
- May 2021 – Aug. 2021 Content writer for Oasis Mental Health Applications. Oasis is a virtual platform that offers a suite of mental health tools and content to help schools support their student's mental health and wellness.
- May 2021 Organizer and interviewer for the Staunton Farm Foundation’s *“Smashing Stigma”* series for Mental Health Awareness Month. This project featured the narratives of advocates, activists, and allies with lived experience who work to disrupt and erode sanism in Pennsylvania

Committees and Advisory Boards

- November 2022 Committee member for doctoral candidate, India Christian; Dissertation topic: Recognizing Supports and Barriers Reconceptualizing Disability Geographies
- August 2022 FISA Foundation Board Member; The FISA Foundation champions equity, justice, safety, and inclusion for women, girls, and people with disabilities, combatting systemic racism that impedes progress for these populations in southwestern Pennsylvania
- April 2020 – August 2022 Unabridged Press, All Abilities Media, and Point Park University’s Center for Media Innovation Advisory Board Member; These organizations collaborate to revise and rewrite how disability narratives are shared in the media by centering and amplifying the voices of disability advocates, activists, and allies

- February 2020 Committee member for doctoral candidate, Adina Rubin-Budick; Dissertation topic: The Use of Role-Playing in Psychotherapy
- October 2019 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 30th Anniversary Celebration Committee Member; Targeted goals: increase disability awareness by organizing educational events and experiences with a focus on promoting access, emphasizing inclusion, and showcasing marginalized narratives in the city of Pittsburgh
- March 2019 – Current Enhancing Treatment and Utilization for Depression and Emergent Suicidality (ETUDES) Board Member; The ETUDES Center aims to help primary care physicians assess and increase engagement of depressed and suicidal youth through innovative new technologies
- March 2019 – 2020 Inside Our Minds Volunteer and Guest Speaker; Inside Our Minds is a peer-controlled, radical mental health organization that works to elevate the voices of people with lived experience of mental illness, madness, and other conceptualizations of mental health
- August 2018 – Current Duquesne University’s School of Education Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Program Alumni Advisory Board Member; Alumni advisory board members are responsible for launching board initiatives that include but are not limited to: advising the Director and Steering Committee, forming panels and organizing a speakers series for the current cohorts that addresses topical issues in leadership, matching alumni with current students to serve as mentors during a student's first two years in the program, organizing social events, and helping launch a yearly educational leadership summit Sept. 2016 – 2020 Pittsburgh Center for Autistic Advocacy (PCAA) Board Member; PCAA seeks to advance the equity of autistic people in all realms of life. PCAA believes in inclusive education, policy, and community for autistic people and all people with disabilities. PCAA works to make autistic voices heard in conversations about autism and empower autistic leaders in our community using principles of the disability rights movement and intersectional feminism
- April 2016 – November 2019 Consumer Health Coalition (CHC) Board Member and Member of the Advocacy Committee; CHC is dedicated to inspiring a consumer movement to advance health and enhance access to quality, affordable health care. CHC targets populations that are at-risk for experiencing barriers to good health and health care. This includes people with low incomes, the uninsured and underinsured, and underserved populations
- March 2015 – Sept 2016 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 25th Anniversary Celebration Communications Committee co-chair; Organizing community events that celebrate and increase awareness regarding disability, access, inclusion, diversity, and opportunity

- February 2015 - 2020 University of Pittsburgh and Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh Advisory Board Member for Project Supporting Our Valued Adolescents (SOVA); SOVA’s mission is to increase access to care for adolescents and young adults with depression as well as their parents through social media
- November 2014 - Feb. 2015 United Way of Allegheny County Task Force Committee Member; Review proposals and award grants to support initiatives geared towards helping the disability community
- Summer 2013 Pennsylvania Innovative Action Leadership Committee Member; This coalition was designed to provide intentional linkage between young professionals across disciplines and across the state in order to streamline professional and leadership development and initiatives
- Sept. 2008 – June 2013 Child and Family Committee Member for the Allegheny County Coalition for Recovery (ACCR); ACCR’s mission is to increase awareness of behavioral health recovery and to promote the use of recovery principles and practices in behavioral health services
- Sept. 2008 – Dec. 2011 Governing Board Member and President of the Pennsylvania Youth Leadership Network (PYLN); PYLN is one of the longest standing youth-led, youth-driven groups in Pennsylvania, established in 2005 as an initiative of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Bureau of Special Education. Up until 2013 PYLN focused on providing assemblies, trainings, and resources for Special Education professionals, youth with disabilities, and their families. Since 2013, PYLN has shifted their focus to providing youth leadership and youth development opportunities for *all* youth and young adults, professionals, and families

Awards and Honors

- April 2021 Recipient of a Part-Time Faculty Mission Grant from Duquesne University to bring social justice work into the classroom; *Unpacking Ableism: Bringing Disability to Duquesne University*, an interview series celebrating the work of five disability advocates, activists, and allies in Pittsburgh, PA
- March 2021 Committee recipient of Duquesne University’s Creative Teaching Award for “*Interprofessional Roundtables: Innovating Solutions to Contemporary Mental Health Challenges and Social Injustices*,” a multidisciplinary learning and engagement opportunity in which students from diverse backgrounds enrolled in diverse majors partnered to develop holistic interventions for self-advocates living with mental illness in our community
- April 2020 Recipient of a Martin Luther King, Jr. Inspiration Award; nominated by a Duquesne University student

- August 2019 Committee recipient of The Rangos Foundation Prize for “*Interprofessional Roundtables Innovating Solutions to Contemporary Mental Health Challenges and Social Injustices*. “a multidisciplinary learning and engagement opportunity in which students from diverse backgrounds enrolled in diverse majors partnered to develop holistic interventions for self-advocates living with mental illness in our community
- May 2018 Recipient of Duquesne University’s School of Education’s Distinguished Dissertation Award for 2018
- December 2016 Recipient of ACHIEVA’s Tony Leech Award; Awarded to individuals with disabilities who have leadership qualities and strength of spirit; ACHIEVA is a nonprofit parent organization that has comprehensive services and supports and serves thousands of individuals with disabilities and their families each year
- December 2015 Recipient of the Mind, Heart, Spirit of Leadership Award at Duquesne University, School of Education; In recognition of contributions to the cohort and program by promoting social justice, modeling hard work and dedication, advocating for human dignity and respect, sharing knowledge, information, and opportunities, inspiring personal and professional growth in others, building strong relationships that support high levels of trust and credibility, demonstrating an open attitude toward self-improvement, exemplifying integrity and ethics, and viewing leadership as the engagement of others
- 2009- 2011 Recipient of the Katherine Carney Scholarship at Duquesne University, School of Education