



CHALLENGING THE PARADIGM 2025

Programming that leads to sustainable jobs and career readiness, understanding neurodiversity and differently abled students, faculty, and staff.

Watson College of Education Building, Room EB 162

February 27, 2025

8:00 - 8:45 AM	Breakfast & Networking
8:45 - 9:00 AM	Welcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome & Acknowledgments: Dr. Denise Henning • Greeting from Dean of Watson College of Education: Dr. Tracy Linderholm
9:00 - 10:00 AM	Introduction of Keynote: Keynote Speaker: Dr. James Stocker Title: Neurodiversity and the Promise of AI  <p>James Stocker is an associate professor of special education at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. Prior to his appointment at UNCW in 2017, Jim garnered over 15 years of practitioner experience as a public-school teacher and behavior analyst. His research focuses on academic interventions, STEM education, applied behavior analysis, and inclusive practices. He served as co-principal investigator on two National Science Foundation grants that involved delivering educational programming in STEM to students from underserved and underrepresented populations. He is currently focused on building training programs in behavior analysis to support the strengths and needs of neurodiverse learners.</p>
10:00 - 10:15 AM	Health Break
10:15 - 12:00 PM	Plenary Session #1: Moving from Neurodivergent Affirming to Neurodivergent Informed Approaches in College <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenter: Cam Sherman, LCMHC-A • Description: This session explores neurodivergent-informed approaches to supporting students in higher education, emphasizing assessment, individualized planning, and fostering self-efficacy.
12:00 - 12:45 PM	Lunch & Networking
12:45 - 1:45 PM	Plenary Session #2: Access to Achievement – Transforming Educational Pathways for Students with IDD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenters: Vickie Vinson, Nancye Gaj & Team (NC Community College System) • Description: Panel discussion on North Carolina’s inclusive post-secondary initiative that creates accessible educational pathways for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).



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1:45 - 2:00 PM	Health Break
2:00 - 3:30 PM	<p>Plenary Session #3: Building Your Toolkit: Strategies for Working with Neurodiverse Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenters: Katie Krieger & Kari Schmitz, Disability Resource Center, UNCW • Description: This interactive session provides an overview of practical strategies for supporting neurodiverse students in various settings. Participants will engage in small and large group discussions to explore the application of these strategies in real-world contexts, fostering collaboration and deeper understanding. The session is designed to equip educators, staff, and allies with tools to create more inclusive and effective learning environments.
3:30 - 4:00 PM	<p>Summary & Close of Day 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Denise Henning
4:00 - 5:00 PM	Networking





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February 28, 2025

8:00 - 8:45 AM	Breakfast & Networking
8:45 - 9:00 AM	Welcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome & Review of Day 1: Dr. Denise Henning
9:00 - 10:00 AM	Introduction of Keynote: Keynote Speaker: Dr. Tracy Mancini Title: Creating Pathways to Success for all Students
	 <p>Dr. Tracy Mancini became the sixth president of Carteret Community College on June 1, 2020, after having served as the College's chief academic and student development officer and SACSCOC accreditation liaison for four years. Her community college career began when she taught as an adjunct English instructor at Durham Technical Community College in 1994. She went on to teach English, Humanities, and Religion full-time at Durham Tech, eventually serving as chair of the English & Communications discipline and dean of Arts, Sciences, & University Transfer. She is a member and club service coordinator of the Beaufort Ole Towne Rotary and a proud member of Leadership Carteret's Class of 2018. She is first vice president of the Gamma Zeta chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma education sorority and a member of the Beaufort Woman's Club. Dr. Mancini earned her Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the College of William and Mary. Her graduate degrees include a Master of Arts in English from the University of North Florida, a Master of Theological Studies from Duke University, and a Doctor of Education in Community College Executive Leadership from Wingate University. Born in northeast Philadelphia and raised in Vineland, New Jersey, she has lived in North Carolina since 1993. Dr. Mancini and her husband, Norris Cotton, reside in Beaufort and enjoy books and movies, entertaining, kayaking, gardening, keeping up with family, and doting on their dogs, Mudge and Buddy.</p>
10:00 - 10:15 AM	Health Break
10:15 - 12:00 PM	Plenary Session #4: The Transition Works Program at UNCW Presenters: Christine Koch, Laura Rosser, Kayla Thomas, & Students Description: The UNCW Transition Works program leads and students will lead a presentation and discussion of the program that equips young adults with disabilities for independent living.



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12:00 -1:00 PM	Lunch & Networking
1:00 - 2:15 PM	<p>Plenary Session #5: Be Honest – Are You Aware of Your Mental Health?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenters: Dr. Angelo Markantonakis & Mr. Zach Crum • Description: This interactive session addresses mental health awareness in higher education, offering strategies to manage academic and personal stressors.
2:15 – 2:30 PM	Health Break
2:30 – 3:15 PM	<p>Institutional Learner Support: Discussion & Action Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description: Participants will discuss and develop a plan to incorporate what they have learned in the past two days into work they do at their institution.
3:15 - 3:30 PM	<p>Summary & Close</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Deborah Grimes

