



SUNY DOWNSTATE DISABILITY AWARENESS CONFERENCE

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Jamie Grecco, J.D., Senior Vice President/Chief of Staff

Allen Lewis, Ph.D., CRC, School of Health Professions Dean

Brigitte Desport, DPS, SOHP Associate Dean for Strategic Initiatives

Panel 1: What is Happening at Downstate Related to Disability

Moderated by **Efekona Nuwere, Ed.D.**, Chair of Occupational Therapy, this panel focused on current initiatives, challenges, and opportunities within Downstate's disability-related programs. Panelists shared insights into the institution's efforts to enhance training, reduce stigma, and improve administrative practices that support disability inclusion.

Panelists:

Puneet Dhaliwal, DPT, Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy

Vikram Pagpatan, Ed.D., Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy

Jason Vladescu, Ph.D., Chair, Applied Analysis Program

Jordan Weil, M.D., Kings County and Downstate Department of Psychiatry

Harris Huberman, M.D., Director, Division of Child Development

Zachery Durkin, MSM, Assistant Director, Office of Employee and Labor Relations

Patricia Napolitano, MS Ed, Assistant Director, Office of Student Affairs

Panel 2: Contemporary Perspectives on Disability

Moderated by **Dean Lewis**, the second panel delved into broader societal issues and contemporary perspectives on disability. Panelists explored topics such as the intersection of disability rights with other social movements, the role of self-advocacy, and the importance of embedding disability culture into professional training programs.

Panelists:

John O'Neill, Ph.D., Director of the Kessler Foundation for Rehabilitation Research and Employment

Susanne Bruyere, Ph.D., Academic Director of the Yang and Tan Institute on Employment and Disability, Cornell University

Mabel Martinez-Almonte, OTR/L, Mental Health Taskforce, NYSOTA Community of Practice

Shushawna DeOliveira, DHA, SOHP, Associate Dean for Program Operations and Quality