

Speaker Profiles

Mary Lee Vance, Ph.D.



Mary Lee Vance, Ph.D. is currently the Director of the Disability Access Center, Testing Center, Disability Cultural Center and Assistive Technology Lab at California State University Sacramento, where she also served as interim Director for the Office of Equal Opportunity, Title IX and Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation (DHR). She has taught undergraduate and graduate courses, including disability studies, and has successfully written federal grants, as well as published in referred journals, books, and periodicals. She serves as a reviewer for the AHEAD and NACADA refereed journals and has for over 16 years taught disability law classes and seminars with Grossman, Axelrod and Vance Consulting.

She is the editor of *DISABLED Faculty and Staff in a Disabling Society: Multiple Perspectives in Higher Education*; and co-editor of *Beyond the Americans with Disabilities Act: Proactively Planning for Accessible Post-Secondary Educational Offerings Now and into the Future*; *Advising Students with Disabilities: Developing Universal Success*; *Laws, Policies and Processes: Tools for Postsecondary Student Accommodation*, and *DISABLED Faculty and Staff: Intersecting Identities in Higher Education*.

Rahsaan Ellison-Johnson



Rahsaan Ellison-Johnson currently serves as Associate Director of the Disability Access Center at CSUS. He received his B.A. in English with a minor in Ethnic Studies from University of the Pacific in Stockton CA. As an undergraduate student, Rahsaan was involved with several social justice student groups and identified his career path in Student Affairs. Rahsaan received his M.A. in Education from University of the Pacific and acquired experience in Student Affairs in his roles as a Diversity Coordinator and Safe Zone Program Assistant in Multicultural Affairs, and as a Disability Service Provider, Academic Coach, Coordinator, and Assistant Director of Services for Students with Disabilities.

Jennifer Murchison



Jennifer Murchison is the Executive Director for Universal Access and Inclusion as well as the ADA Coordinator for California State University, Sacramento. Starting in August 2022, Jennifer has led a charge for change at Sac State through the Office for Disability Justice and Division of Inclusive Excellence. Her goal is to help others understand disability as an integral part of diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice measures.

Jennifer has worked in disability services and justice since 2001, and shares a birthday (July 26) with the Americans with Disabilities Act, though several years apart.

Never one without a recommendation for books on disability and disabled activism, Jennifer welcomes recommendations from others.

If you engage Jennifer in a conversation about movies, be warned that there is a strong likelihood for an impromptu, no notes 60-minute lecture on Paul Robeson and/or pre-Code Hollywood films made from 1930 through 1934.

Katie Beekman



Katie Beekman holds the position of Accessible Technology Consultant at California State University, Sacramento. In this role, she is responsible for reviewing the university's current and potential technology acquisitions for accessibility concerns, and working with vendors on ways to remediate their products to conform with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and Section 508 accessibility standards. Katie is also a member of the campus's Universal Design for Learning program that provides training and guidance to faculty on creating universally accessible course materials.

Before performing this role, Katie worked as a Special Education Teacher in K-12 before starting at Sac State as an Administrative Analyst in 2008.

Alan Dixon-Hurd



Alan Dixon-Hurd holds the position of Assistant Director for Exam Proctoring Services at California State University, Sacramento. In this role, he assumes the responsibility of overseeing the comprehensive planning, management, and supervision of various national, state, and local testing programs. These programs are essential for processes such as admission, placement, certification, and graduation requirements. Additionally, Alan provides direct oversight for accommodated, make-up, correspondence, Pearson VUE, and TEAS testing programs.

Before joining the team at Sac State, Alan served as a manager at Pearson VUE. During his tenure there, he held the responsibility of overseeing multiple test centers located in Northern California. Alan's expertise and experience in the field of exam proctoring and testing management make him a valuable asset to the California State University, Sacramento community.

Michael Smith



Michael Smith serves as the Testing Coordinator at California State University, Sacramento.

Michael has served in the disability services environment for close to ten years now, he plays a crucial part in facilitating the efficient and accurate administration of accommodated exams for students with disabilities.

Michael is responsible for coordinating the logistics of testing programs, ensuring proper test security measures, and managing the scheduling and registration processes. He works closely with students, faculty, and staff to provide support and guidance related to testing procedures and accommodations.

Nikolas Soza



Nikolas Soza works as the Assistive Technology Lab Lead and IT specialist for the Disability Access Center at California State University, Sacramento. With nearly a decade of experience in the IT field, Nikolas brings a wealth of expertise and a passion for leveraging technology to empower students with the tools they need to thrive. His commitment to innovation fuels his role in spearheading the lab's continuous advancements and ensuring cutting-edge solutions are readily available. As an alumnus of California State University, Sacramento, Nikolas possesses a deep understanding of the unique needs and challenges faced by students in higher education. His presence in both the IT and disability access spaces provides a distinct vantage point, enabling him to revolutionize student experiences by harnessing the power of technology. Nikolas is an alumnus of California State University, Sacramento and has been in the greater Sacramento Area since 2009.

Arash Borhany



Arash Borhany holds the position of Assistive Technology Analyst at California State University, Sacramento. In this role, he manages the Assistive Technology Lab and Disability Culture Center, including the Sensory room users and activities. In this role, he is responsible for and supervises the daily activities at the lab for all assistive technology tools/software and training needs, such as text-to-speech, speech-to-text platforms, license allocations, alternate formats, document conversion, etc. In addition, he is responsible for coordinating with the Department of Rehab representatives housed at ATL and serving Sac State students and staff members. During the last seven years, Arash held multiple positions at Sac State. Before the ATL position, Arash was the TRiO Coordinator assisting the department in running SSS TRiO federal program.

Tooba Ishaq



Tooba Ishaq recently graduated from Sacramento State University, majoring in Social Work and a minor in Child Development. She is currently a continuing graduate student in the MSW program at Sacramento State. Tooba worked at the Testing Center with SSWD during her undergrad, providing proctoring and accommodating services for students with disabilities. She has also served as a student representative for students with disabilities on the University Disability Advocacy Committee.

Tooba was diagnosed with a degenerative eye disease that has rendered her visually impaired. Her personal experience with disability motivated her to pursue her chosen career, and she would like to specialize in the areas of General/Mental/Behavioral Health and Geriatrics with a focus on disability advocacy during her graduate studies. She has volunteered and worked with several non-profit organizations including the Society for the Blind, where she continues to receive assistive technology training and is learning braille. Tooba also utilized the Testing Center and has tested various equipment to accommodate her disability. With this experience and understanding, she hopes to provide valuable input to advance the future of accessible technology.

Aubrei Drennan



Aubrei Drennan is currently in her Junior year at Sacramento State University. She is majoring in Biochemistry, participating in the Finish in Four program, and is a member of the Honors program. Aubrei is completing her first year as an Assistive Technology Lab Assistant with the Disability Access Center. Her role in the department is to assist students with accessible technology consultations, convert textbooks and other class materials into accessible documents, produce informational PowerPoint presentations, and create technology flowcharts for student use. After completing her bachelor's degree, Aubrei intends to continue her education through a master's program with the goal of becoming a Pharmaceutical Researcher.

Lily Anne Manderfield



My name is Lily, and I am a senior at Sacramento State University. I am majoring in Communication Sciences and Disorders with the goal of attending graduate school and becoming a speech-language pathologist. I chose to study speech-language pathology largely inspired by my life experiences. I was born with a rare heart defect that has required me to undergo 5 heart surgeries and multiple hospitalizations throughout my life. Related to my heart defect, I also have a learning disability. I would not be alive and thriving if it were not for the faithful support of countless medical and educational professionals. I hope that by becoming a speech-language pathologist, I will in some small way pay forward the compassionate care I have received by assisting individuals who have challenges in speech and language. Through working as a substitute paraeducator in special education and volunteering at Shriners Children's, I have learned that I have a passion for helping children with disabilities and desire to specialize in aiding this wonderful population when I become a speech-language pathologist.

Shannon Brown



Shannon Brown is the Administrative Analyst for the Disability Access Center at California State University, Sacramento. In this role, she assumes the responsibility of overseeing office operations and budgets for the department. She also assists with special projects such as designing the Disability Cultural Center, social space, and sensory rooms.

Before joining the team at Sac State, Shannon worked in administration, special education, human resources, technology, circus performance, as well as child, elder, and disabled adult care. Her diverse skillset makes her a valuable asset to the California State University, Sacramento community.