



4th Biennial Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing
Scientists ROC Conference

Bridging the Gap:
**Empowering Deaf and
Hard of Hearing Students
in Hearing Research
Environments**

August 29 - 30, 2024



UNIVERSITY of
ROCHESTER
MEDICAL CENTER

RIT

National Technical
Institute for the Deaf

About our programs:

Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing Scientists ROC

Deaf and hard-of-hearing (D/HH) individuals are greatly underrepresented in our nation's biomedical research workforce, for reasons that include lack of access to opportunities, inadequate support, a dearth of peer role models, and a poor understanding of their unique needs at the research-intensive universities where young scientists are trained.

Deaf/HH Scientists Roc Conference aims to advance the success of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in biomedical and behavioral sciences research careers. It will do so by bringing together aspiring and successful Deaf/HH scientists and allied groups from across the nation to network and build a community – thereby creating opportunities for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Scientists as they navigate their training and career paths. Our mission is both to forge new alliances between D/HH and hearing scientists, and also to provide an opportunity for D/HH scientists to network, build community, meet peer role models, present and share data, and gain important skills through workshops and small group sessions.

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DEAF ROC COMMITTEE TEAM



Gerald J. Buckley, EdD

President, National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)
Vice President, Rochester Institute of Technology
Dean for the NTID

Gerard Buckley, EdD has more than 30 years of experience in higher education, including more than 20 years serving in a variety of capacities at NTID. From 1990 to 1993, Buckley served as chairperson and assistant professor of the Department of Educational Outreach at NTID, followed by five years as director of NTID's Center for Outreach and assistant professor on the RIT/NTID Social Work Support Team. From 1998 to 2003, he served as NTID associate dean for student services, and held the position of NTID assistant vice president for college advancement with responsibility for the admissions, placement, marketing, and outreach operations of the college from 2004 until beginning his role as President of NTID and Vice President of RIT on January 1, 2011.



Dr. Buckley has maintained an active teaching portfolio over the past 20 years. He was awarded tenure in 1998. He has twice been awarded the NTID Faculty/Staff Humanitarian Award by the NTID Student Congress, and was named Distinguished Alumnus for NTID in 1985 and for RIT's College of Liberal Arts in 1996.

He has served as President of the Board of the American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association and as President of the Lexington School for the Deaf Board of Trustees in New York City. He also has served on the National Advisory Board of NIH's Institute on Deafness at the recommendation of Senator Robert Dole (retired). Buckley holds a B.S. in Social Work from RIT/NTID, an M.S.W. from University of Missouri and an Ed.D. in Special Education from the University of Kansas.

He is a native of St. Louis, MO. He and his wife, Judy, live outside of Rochester, N.Y. They have three adult children and five grandchildren.

DEAF ROC COMMITTEE TEAM



Stephen Dewhurst, PhD

Vice Dean for Research
Professor and Chair Microbiology and Immunology
University of Rochester School of Medicine Dentistry

Stephen Dewhurst, PhD serves as the Vice President for Research at the University of Rochester (UR) as well as the Vice Dean for Research for the UR's School of Medicine & Dentistry. His research focuses on pathogenic human viruses, including HIV, influenza and SARS-CoV-2, and he codirects the UR's HIV Clinical Trials Unit (CTU), which conducts HIV vaccine and treatment trials and engages with communities affected by HIV. He also co-directs the Rochester Partnership for Research and Academic Career Training of Deaf Postdoctoral Scholars, a unique partnership between UR and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT).



He has received numerous mentoring and teaching awards, including the UR's highest award for graduate education (the William H. Riker University Award for Graduate Teaching).



Craig Morrell, DVM, PhD

Craig Morrell, DVM, PhD is a Professor and Co-Director of the Aab Cardiovascular Research Institute at the University of Rochester School of Medicine, Co-Director of the IMSD at Rochester T32 program and Training Program Director of the Rochester Post-Doc Partnership. He earned his undergraduate degree from Brown University in 1995 and then graduated from Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine in 2000. He then completed a concurrent Ph.D. and Comparative Pathology fellowship at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Research the Morrell lab is focused on the complex interface between platelets, the vasculature, and immune cells.

Ongoing and past studies in his lab examine platelet, and platelet derived inflammatory mediator interactions with both vascular and immune cells, and the impact of these interactions have on tissue injury responses in disease relevant contexts. Dr. Morrell is actively involved in research training at URMC. Over the course of his research career, he has mentored numerous undergraduate and graduate students as well as post-doctoral fellows.



Deirdre Schlehofer, EdD

Deirdre “DD” Schlehofer, EdD is an Associate Professor in the Department of Liberal Studies at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) at the National Institute for the Deaf (NTID). She earned her undergraduate degree in cognitive psychology from the University of Alaska at Anchorage. She received her MPhil. degree at the University of Bristol (U.K.), well-known for its cutting-edge global research, and ranked 55th in the world in the OS World University Rankings 2024. Having resided in Alaska, Scotland, England, and Zimbabwe, Dr. Schlehofer has long been interested in the languages and cultures of deaf indigenous peoples. She received her doctorate degree with high distinction in emergent literacy and bilingualism at the University of Rochester in 2009.

At the same time, she worked as a health project coordinator at the National Center for Deaf Health Research at the University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry (URMC). In 2010, Dr. Schlehofer began teaching at RIT/NTID as a tenure-track assistant professor and was a co-director of the Deaf Health Laboratory at the NTID Research Center on Culture and Language. In 2012, Dr. Schlehofer completed a year-long multidimensional mentoring project, Upstate New York Initiative (NIH-funded), to promote resilience among under-represented minorities and women in junior faculty positions in biomedical research-related fields at URMC. In 2023, she was co-director at the Inclusive Assessment of Multi-Modal Multilingual (IAMS3) Summer Institute at the University of Stockholm, being responsible for teaching mixed methods workshops with deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing international doctoral students. She has received numerous mentoring and teaching awards, including the 2023-2024 NTID Teaching/Tutoring Award for Tenured Faculty. For the academic year 2024-2025 she has been nominated for the RIT Eisenhardt Award for Outstanding Teaching. Over many years she has mentored undergraduate and graduate students on health research projects. Most recently, she was an Acting Director at the Deaf Health Care and Biomedical Science Hub (Deaf Hub) at RIT/NTID during the Spring 2024 semester. Dr. Schlehofer’s research interests are mixed methods, sign language linguistics, and deaf women’s health at the global level.



Sara Blick-Nitko, PhD

Sara Blick-Nitko, PhD, is a postdoctoral associate in the laboratory of Dr. Isaac Harris in the Department of Biomedical Genetics and in the Rochester Postdoc Partnership program. Her research focus involves employing the Multifunctional Approach to Pharmacologic Screening (MAPS) to study novel vulnerabilities in cancer cells. Sara Blick-Nitko earned her PhD in Pathology at the University of Rochester Medical Center. Her doctoral research focused on the role of platelet Ido1 in *Plasmodium yoelii* uncomplicated malaria infection.

Beyond her research pursuits, Dr. Blick-Nitko is dedicated to advocacy efforts aimed at improving the environment for the deaf community. She actively promotes language equity and works towards ensuring accessibility for all. Her commitment extends to breaking barriers and fostering an inclusive society where the deaf can thrive without limitations, their language is respected, and accessibility is regarded as a fundamental right rather than an afterthought.



Tiffany Panko, MD, MBA

Tiffany Panko, MD, MBA is an associate research professor at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Dr. Panko is the Executive Director of the NTID Deaf Health Care and Biomedical Science Hub (Deaf Hub), that works towards representation of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in health care and biomedical science careers. She directs the Deaf Health Lab, one of three research labs housed within the Deaf Hub focusing on health disparities and healthcare access. She is an upcoming investigator in women's health and healthcare access research, with a focus on the cultural and linguistic minority deaf population that uses American Sign Language as their first language.

Dr. Panko also co-directs the Undergraduate Research Training Initiative for Scientific Enhancement (U-RISE), one of mentor-supported programs within the Deaf Hub for RIT/NTID deaf and hard-of-hearing students pursuing a career in biomedical sciences or health care.

Dr. Panko holds a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences degree and an MBA from the Rochester Institute of Technology. She earned her Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Rochester. She is a Rochester native and lives in Rochester, NY with her husband and baby. When she isn't working, she is doing yoga, cheering for the Green Bay Packers, or experimenting in the kitchen.



Phu "Johnny" Duong, PhD

Postdoctoral Associate studying the role of epigenetics in zebrafish fin regeneration under the mentorship of Patrick Murphy, PhD, in the Department of Biomedical Genetics.



Melody "Pepsi" Holmquist, PhD

Assistant Professor, graduating from RIT with B.S. in Biochemistry in 2012. Then she completed her Ph.D. from the biochemistry program at The Ohio State University in 2020. Now currently teaching Deaf students in lab instrumentation at Rochester Institute of Technology, National Technical Institute for the Deaf.



Sharon Pomeroy, MA

Office Administrator for the Office of the Vice President For Research
University of Rochester



Krystal Starks, BA

Senior Staff Assistant
NTID Deaf Health Care and Biomedical Science Hub
RIT | National Technical Institute for the Deaf



Athena Willis, PhD

Postdoctoral Associate in the Laboratory of John Foxe, PhD, in the Department of Neuroscience and in the Rochester Postdoc Partnership program.

Special thanks to the committee/conference team members for their continued support!

RIT team

- Brenna Cialini
- Cynthia Collward
- Laurie Furibondo
- Krystina Ho
- Kat Womack

UR team

- Rachel Hillhouse
- Kirsi Majuri-Langdon
- Patricia White

Access Providers team

- Byron Behm
- Michelle Behm
- Brittney Best
- Sharon Bournival
- Hannah Cameron
- Kyleigh Camp
- Dana Cardona
- Tiffany Taylor Contreras
- Nic Crouse-Dickerson
- Katherine Ferrall
- Ali Giudice
- Rae Green
- Ashley Griffith
- Catherine Kiwitt

Access Providers team

- Carolyn Kropp
- Sarah LaMascus
- Michael Listman
- Nicole Lupinetti
- Alex Mitrovits
- Jacquie Newman
- Heather Pickett
- Melina Rivera
- Julia Rood
- Emily Schenker
- Samantha Schmidt
- Deanna Stawnychy
- Brendan Tibbs-Najarro
- Quinn Webb
- Hope Williams
- Kat Womack
- Corey Wright
- White Coat Captioning

University of Rochester (UR)

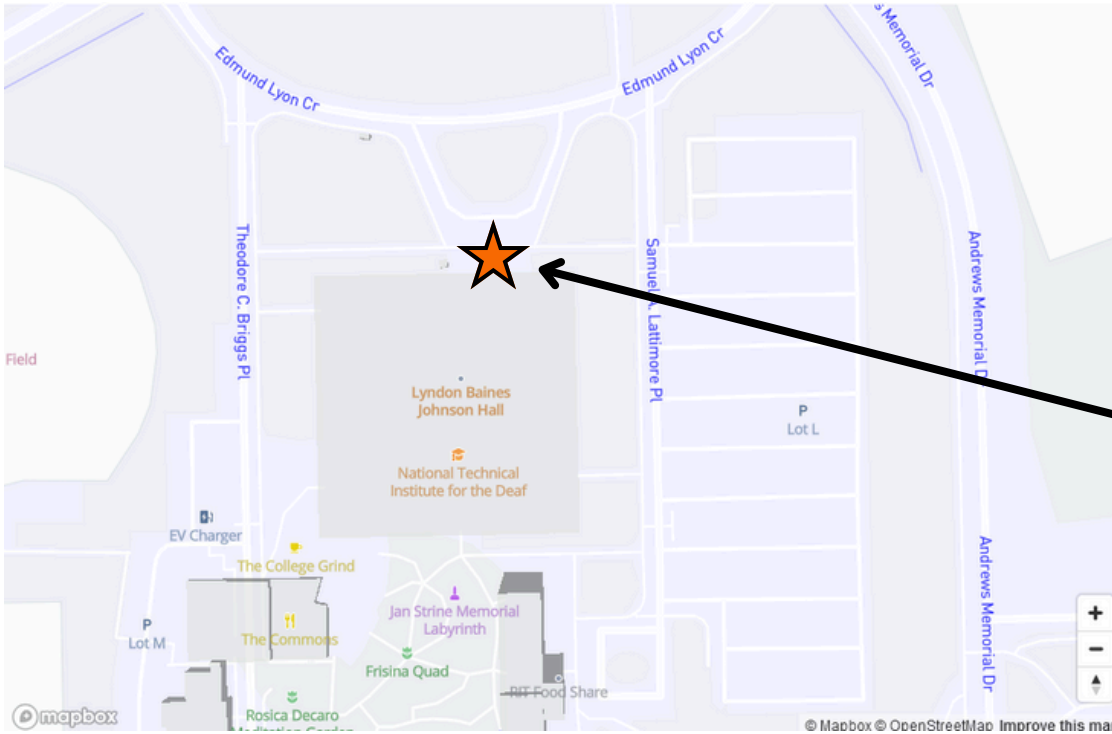
601 Elwood Ave. Rochester, NY 14642

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

52 Lomb Memorial Dr. Rochester, NY 14623

Time	From	To
7:30 - 7:50 a.m.	RIT Dyer Arts Center	UR Lot 6
9:30 - 9:50 a.m.	RIT Dyer Arts Center	UR Lot 6
12:30 - 12:50 p.m.*	UR Lot 6	RIT Dyer Arts Center
1:00 - 1:20 p.m.	RIT Dyer Arts Center	UR Lot 6
3:00 - 3:20 p.m.	RIT Dyer Arts Center	UR Lot 6
7:00 - 7:20 p.m.*	UR Lot 6	RIT Dyer Arts Center

****There are two rides provided from UR to RIT.
Please schedule your ride accordingly.***



Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

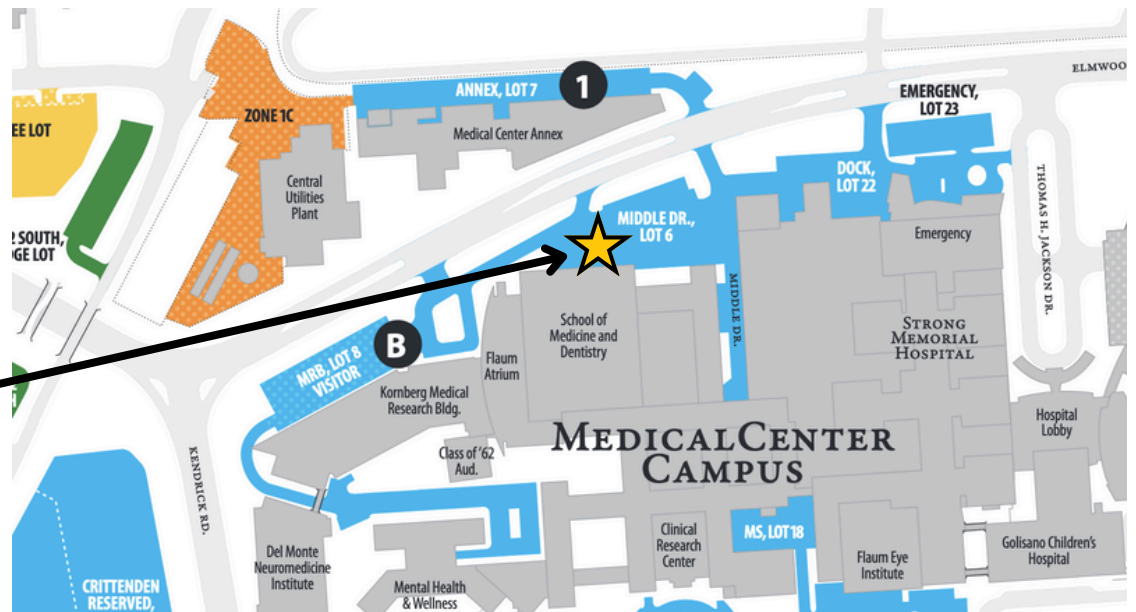
52 Lomb Memorial Dr.
Rochester, NY 14623

Drop-off Location

University of Rochester (UR)

601 Elwood Ave.
Rochester, NY 14642

Drop-off Location



**THURSDAY
AUG. 29
2024**

**University
of Rochester**

*School of Medical
and Dentistry*

601 Elmwood Ave,
Rochester, NY 14642

**2024
Deaf ROC
Conference
11**

8 - 9 a.m.

Registration and
Continental Breakfast
Sarah Flaum Atrium

9 - 9:15 a.m.

Welcome and Intro
Steven Dewhurst, PhD and
Gerry Buckley, EdD
Class of '62 Auditorium

9:15 - 10:15 a.m.

Keynote Presentation
Leading in Difficult Times
Carol Padden, PhD
Class of '62 Auditorium

10:15 - 10:30 a.m.

BREAK WITH REFRESHMENTS

10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Please choose one discussion from the three options below.

Publication Know How

Facilitated by Brittany Watterson



Michelle Carr, PhD, Tyler James, PhD,
MCHES, Patricia White, PhD, and PJ
Simpson-Haidaris, PhD
1-9525/35 Northeastern Room

Graduate Mentorship

Facilitated by Sara Blick-Nitko, PhD



Aileen Aldalur, PhD, Athena Willis, PhD,
Craig Morrell, DVM, PhD, and Pat Murphy,
PhD
1-9545 Natapow Room

**THURSDAY
AUG. 29
2024**

**University
of Rochester**
*School of Medical
and Dentistry*
601 Elmwood Ave,
Rochester, NY 14642

**2024
Deaf ROC
Conference
12**

10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | PANEL DISCUSSIONS - CONT'D
Please choose one discussion from the three options below.



**Experiences, Strengths, and Challenges
of Pursuing My Career Path**

Facilitated by Michelle Koplitz

Mariam Paracha, PharmD, Pepsi Holmquist,
PhD, and Phu Duong, PhD

1-9555 Louise Slaughter Room

**11:30 a.m. -
12:30 p.m.**

Keynote Presentation
Neuroplasticity in Language
Bradley White, PhD
Class of '62 Auditorium

12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

LUNCH

1:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Keynote Presentation
**Competency in Leadership:
Collaborative**
Chris Woodfill, MS, MA
Class of '62 Auditorium

2:30 - 2:45 p.m.

BREAK

**THURSDAY
AUG. 29
2024**

**University
of Rochester**
*School of Medical
and Dentistry*
601 Elmwood Ave,
Rochester, NY 14642

2:45 - 3:45 p.m. | PANEL DISCUSSIONS
Please choose one discussion from the three options below.



Publication Know How

Facilitated by Brittany Watterson

Michelle Carr, PhD, Tyler James, PhD,
MCHES, Patricia White, PhD, and PJ
Simpson-Haridaris, PhD
1-9525/35 Northeastern Room



Graduate Mentorship

Facilitated by Sara Blick-Nitko, PhD

Aileen Aldalur, PhD, and Athena Willis, PhD,
Craig Morrell, DVM, PhD, and Pat Murphy, PhD
1-9545 Natapow Room



**Experiences, Strengths, and Challenges
of Pursuing My Career Path**

Facilitated by Michelle Koplitz

Mariam Paracha, PharmD, Pepsi Holmquist,
PhD, and Alesia Allen, PhD
1-9555 Louise Slaughter Room

**2024
Deaf ROC
Conference
13**

3:45 - 4:30 p.m.

POSTER SESSION

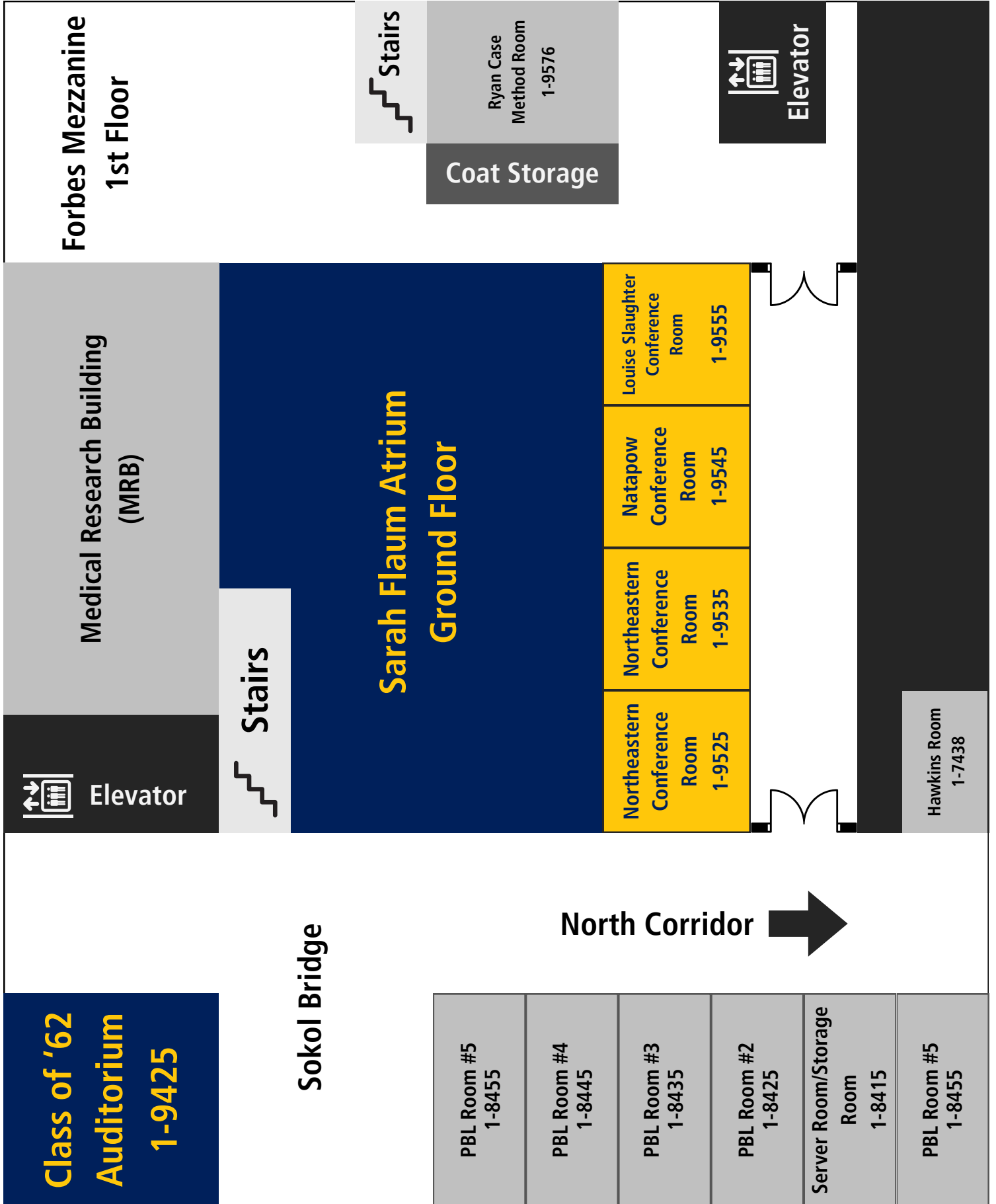
LeChase outside the atrium

4:45 - 6:30 p.m.

COCKTAIL RECEPTION & AWARDS

*Hilton Garden Inn
30 Celebration Drive*

First Floor Layout of the Conference Center Area



LEADING IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Carol Padden, PhD

Keynote Presenter



Dean of School of Social Sciences, Distinguished Professor, and Sanford I. Berman Endowed Chair from Department of Communication at University of California, San Diego (UCSD)

Carol Padden, PhD is a Distinguished Professor and holds the Sanford Berman Endowed Chair in Language and Human Communication at UC San Diego. She is also Dean of the School of Social Sciences, a position she has held since 2014. Her research focuses on the structure and evolution of sign languages and cultural life in deaf communities. Over the last 20 years, Padden and her research colleagues have studied an emergent sign language that continues to be used in a Bedouin village in the Negev in southern Israel. Padden and her husband, Tom Humphries, co-authored two landmark books in sign languages and deaf studies, *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture* (1988) and *Inside Deaf Culture* (2005), and two textbooks on American Sign Language for students in high schools and universities around the country. She was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 2010, a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1992 and she holds two honorary doctorates from the University of Haifa, Israel in 2015, and Swarthmore College in 2016.

9:15 - 10:15 a.m.
Class of '62 Auditorium

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

LEADING IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Carol Padden, PhD

Keynote Presenter

9:15 - 10:15 a.m. | Class of 62 Auditorium

As Dean of the School of Social Sciences, she oversees 11 departments, 5 programs and several Centers which carry out research on educational equity, social mobility, immigration policy and post-civil rights Black Studies. An advocate for deaf communities, Padden is active in promoting research on sign languages around the world and in shaping policy and practices that advance the full participation of deaf people in society.

NEUROPLASTICITY IN LANGUAGE

Bradley White, PhD

Keynote Presenter



Senior Research Manager at the Brain, Language, and Learning (BL2) Center for Neuroimaging in Gallaudet University

Dr. Bradley White is a Senior Research Manager at the Brain, Language, and Learning (BL2) Center for Neuroimaging, assisting Dr. Laura-Ann Petitto in leading and managing research and training programs. When he is not working, he teaches doctoral courses for the PhD in Educational Neuroscience Program and conducts research for the Visual Language and Visual Learning (VL2) Research Center.

His research focuses on human systems for cognitive load and effortful listening, contributing to our understanding of the impacts of hearing loss and the use of hearing aids and cochlear implants on the brain across development. This project is under the guidance of his advisor, Dr. Clifton Langdon, an assistant professor in the Department of Liberal Studies at RIT/NTID.

Dr. White's research has been featured on the front cover of *NeuroImage* for his groundbreaking discoveries about how the brain is organized for listening effort. He has been invited to present at numerous peer-reviewed conferences and keynote lectures around the world.

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Class of '62 Auditorium

COMPETENCY IN LEADERSHIP: COLLABORATIVE

Christopher “Chris” Woodfill, MS, MA

Keynote Presenter



Executive Director of the New York State Interagency Coordinating Council on Services to Persons who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (IAC)

Chris Woodfill was appointed on January 2, 2024 by Governor Kathleen Hochul to the role of Executive Director of New York State Interagency Coordinating Council on Services to Persons who are Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (IAC). The office has since been renamed to New York State Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Office (The Office). The IAC is under the Office. Prior to working at the Office, Chris was the Associate Executive Director at Helen Keller National Center. Prior to that role, Chris was the Helen Keller National Center regional representative for New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands. Prior to his twelve years career at HKNC, he worked at Wisconsin School for the Deaf for thirteen years as a high school teacher.

1:30 - 2:30 p.m.
Class of '62 Auditorium

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

COMPETENCY IN LEADERSHIP: COLLABORATIVE

Christopher “Chris” Woodfill, MS, MA

Keynote Presenter

1:30 - 2:30 p.m. | Class of 62 Auditorium

Chris has been active in both Deaf and DeafBlind communities at local, state, national and international levels for about three decades. Currently, he is an executive board member of the World Federation of the DeafBlind and a board member of DeafBlind Citizens in Action. In the past, he served as officers or board members of organizations such as Southern Lakes Association of the Deaf, Wisconsin School for the Deaf Alumni Association, Wisconsin School for the Deaf Foundation, Wisconsin Association of the Deaf, Wisconsin DeafBlind Technical Assistance Program, American Association of the DeafBlind and World Federation of the DeafBlind. He has been involved at committee levels with several organizations such as National Association of the Deaf and DeafBlind International among others.

One of his proudest achievements was his leading role as the Vice President of Wisconsin Association of the Deaf in passing the Wisconsin Sign Language Interpreter Licensure bill in 2010. This bill established the Sign Language Interpreter Council (of which he served on for two years prior to his move to New York). It also established a mechanism for licensing all sign language interpreters working for compensation in the state of Wisconsin.

Chris is a believer in servant leadership. He leads to serve the New York state Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing communities.

Chris identifies as a DeafBlind person now. Growing up, he identified as a Deaf person. After a diagnosis of Usher Syndrome at age 18, he underwent a 15-20 years journey transitioning his identity from a Deaf person to a DeafBlind person.

PANEL DISCUSSION | 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | 2:45 - 3:45 p.m.

Please choose one discussion from the three options below.

PUBLICATION KNOW HOW

1-9525/35 Northeastern Room

Join the "Publication Know How" breakout session to master the essentials of crafting an impactful manuscript for publication. Attendees will gain practical insights and expert tips on structuring their research, refining their writing, and navigating the submission process to maximize their chances of acceptance. Whether you're a novice or experienced author, this session will equip you with the tools and confidence needed to successfully publish your work.



Michelle Carr, PhD

Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Addictology at the University of Montreal, and she directs the Dream Engineering Laboratory at the Center for Advanced Research in Sleep Medicine. She is researching the cognitive neuroscience of dreams and nightmares, and investigating how dreams are related to sleep and mental health.



Tyler G. James, PhD, MCHES

PhD, Health and Human Performance concentrating in Health Behavior, University of Florida (graduate minor: Research and Evaluation Methodology), MS, Health Education and Behavior, University of Florida, BS, Psychology, University of Florida



Patricia White, PhD

Bachelor's degree in Biology from the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena in 1989. She completed her Ph.D. degree in Developmental Biology, also at Caltech, in 2000, where she researched neural stem cells. She began post-doctoral work in hearing regeneration at the House Ear Institute, and joined the faculty at the University of Rochester Medical and Dental Center in 2010.

PANEL DISCUSSION | 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | 2:45 - 3:45 p.m.

Please choose one discussion from the three options below.

PUBLICATION KNOW HOW**1-9525/35 Northeastern Room**

Join the "Publication Know How" breakout session to master the essentials of crafting an impactful manuscript for publication. Attendees will gain practical insights and expert tips on structuring their research, refining their writing, and navigating the submission process to maximize their chances of acceptance. Whether you're a novice or experienced author, this session will equip you with the tools and confidence needed to successfully publish your work.

**PJ Simpson-Haidaris, PhD**

Professor Emeritus of Medicine at URM, over 35 years of experience navigating the publication landscape with and over 90 abstracts for presentation at national and international meetings. Her research was on the role of fibrinogen in the pathogenesis of disease progression and resolution in the lung, the vasculature, and cancer, as well as the host response to infection, innate immunity and wound repair. She was the founding Program Director for the Rochester Bridges to the Doctorate (2013 - 2021) and the Rochester Postdoc Partnership (2015-2018) NIH training programs. Her courses in Scientific Communications and Grant Writing at URM resulted in 70% of her trainees having a funding success for their NIH fellowship awards (F30, F31 and CTSI training grants)!

Brittany Watterson, MS

Biomedical Engineering PhD student with research interests in biomechanics, biomaterials, biomedical optics and AI. Her research experience includes investigating point of care HIV diagnostics using hybridization chain reaction (HCR) for enzyme free DNA detection, synthesis of sorbent polymers for analyte detection, and synthesis of novel difluorophores for cross membrane studies. Brittany is currently doing lab rotations. Lab projects include optical tissue clearing, Raman spectroscopy and developing LLM-based agent.

FACILITATOR

PANEL DISCUSSION | 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | 2:45 - 3:45 p.m.

Please choose one discussion from the three options below.

GRADUATE MENTORSHIP

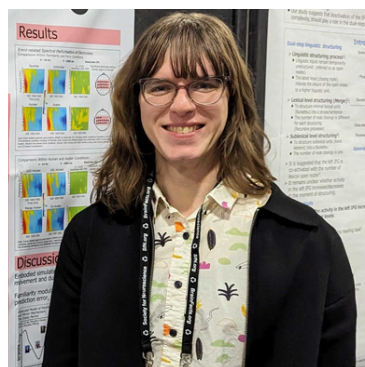
1-9545 Natapow Room

The "Graduate Mentorship" breakout session will offer essential techniques for mentoring deaf and hard of hearing graduate students. Participants will learn how to support advanced academic endeavors, facilitate effective communication, and create inclusive research environments. This session is crucial for fostering the professional and personal development of graduate students in higher education.



Aileen Aldalur, PhD

Research Director at the Deaf Wellness Center. Licensed Deaf Clinical Psychologist.



Athena Willis, PhD

Postdoctoral Associate in the Laboratory of John Foxe, PhD, in the Department of Neuroscience and in the Rochester Postdoc Partnership program.



Craig Morrell, DVM, PhD

Professor and Co-Director of the Aab Cardiovascular Research Institute at the University of Rochester School of Medicine, Co-Director of the IMSD at Rochester T32 program and Training Program Director of the Rochester Post-Doc Partnership

PANEL DISCUSSION | 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | 2:45 - 3:45 p.m.

Please choose one discussion from the three options below.

GRADUATE MENTORSHIP

1-9545 Natapow Room

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Pat Murphy, PhD

Associate Professor for the Department of Biomedical Genetics (SMD) and the Department of Biology RC (RC).

FACILITATOR



Sara Blick-Nitko, PhD

Postdoctoral Associate in the Laboratory of Isaac Harris, PhD, in the Department of Biomedical Genetics and in the Rochester Postdoc Partnership program.

PANEL DISCUSSION | 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | 2:45 - 3:45 p.m.

Please choose one discussion from the three options below.

**EXPERIENCES, STRENGTHS, AND CHALLENGES
PURSUING MY CAREER PATH**

1-955 Louise Slaughter Room

Join the panel session "Experiences, Strengths, and Challenges Pursuing My Career Path" to gain inspiration from successful professionals. Panelists will share their unique journeys, highlighting the strengths they've leveraged and the challenges they've overcome in their careers. This session offers valuable insights and motivation for anyone navigating their own professional path.



Mariam Paracha, PharmD

PharmD, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Science & Mathematics, National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology



Pepsi Holmquist, PhD

Assistant Professor, graduating from RIT with B.S. in Biochemistry in 2012. Then she completed her Ph.D. from the biochemistry program at The Ohio State University in 2020. Now currently teaching Deaf students in lab instrumentation at Rochester Institute of Technology, National Technical Institute for the Deaf.



Phu Duong, PhD | 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Postdoctoral Associate studying the role of epigenetics in zebrafish fin regeneration under the mentorship of Patrick Murphy, PhD, in the Department of Biomedical Genetics.

PANEL DISCUSSION | 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | 2:45 - 3:45 p.m.

Please choose one discussion from the three options below.

**EXPERIENCES, STRENGTHS, AND CHALLENGES
PURSUING MY CAREER PATH**

1-955 Louise Slaughter Room

Join the panel session "Experiences, Strengths, and Challenges Pursuing My Career Path" to gain inspiration from successful professionals. Panelists will share their unique journeys, highlighting the strengths they've leveraged and the challenges they've overcome in their careers. This session offers valuable insights and motivation for anyone navigating their own professional path.



Alesia Allen, PhD | 2:45 - 3:45 p.m.

Assistant Vice President for NTID Diversity and Inclusion, Bachelor's degree in Psychology from RIT/NTID and a master's degree and PhD in clinical psychology from Gallaudet University.

FACILITATOR



Michelle Koplitz, MHS

A third year doctoral trainee at the University of Rochester Medical Center's Translational Biomedical Sciences program. Previously, Michelle worked for 10 years in Federal service as a Project Officer for the Health Resources and Services Administration's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program.

POSTER SESSIONS

Name	Institution	Poster Title
Matthew Barbaro, Ava El-Sayed <i>Dani Wolfe, Marjorie Prokosch</i>	Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY	Individual Factors Affecting Approach Decisions in Police Interactions
Quintina L. Campbell <i>Jonathan Herington, Andrew D. White</i>	University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, NY	Censoring Chemical Data to Mitigate Dual Use Risks in AI
Diamond R. Guy <i>Kassie A. Haitz, John T. Reid, Jason M. Rotoli</i>	National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology, University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, and University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, NY	Exploring the Intersectionality of Being Deaf and Black while Seeking Dermatologic Care
Eric Heinze <i>Jenn Brisson</i>	University of Rochester, Rochester, NY	Evolutionary forces governing the fs3 insertion in the pea aphid
Feeza Jafar <i>Jerry Washel, Melissa McKenna, Tess Phillips, Brad Hageman, Yujie Lu, Linda Magni, Emily Maroni</i>	The DOW Chemical Company, Dow Coating Materials, Collegeville, PA	Developing Anti-Blocking Solutions for Architectural Coatings
Cathleen Jolly <i>Elizabeth Ayers</i>	National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY	The Role of Humor in Sustaining Long-Term Healthy Relationships among Deaf Couples
Michaela Kihntopf <i>Rain Bosworth</i>	Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY	Feasibility of REDCap for project and database management for multiple studies of deaf and hearing children
Michelle Koplitz <i>Peter Veazie, Wyatt Hall</i>	University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, NY	A pilot study identifying relative parental value systems for deaf child developmental domains in the context of Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) system narratives

POSTER SESSIONS

Name	Institution	Poster Title
<p>Kim Kurz</p>	<p>National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY</p>	<p>Inclusive research environments for deaf and hard of hearing students</p>
<p>Chengcheng Liu <i>Junfei Liu and Yiming Yang</i></p>	<p>Jiangsu Normal University, ChinaCenter for International Disability Advocacy and Diplomacy, St. Cloud State University, MN</p>	<p>A Study on the Explications between Chinese Sign Language and Chinese in TV NewsPrograms</p>
<p>Elizabeth Mayes <i>Ilaria Berteletti, James Waller</i></p>	<p>Gallaudet University, Washington, D.C.</p>	<p>The Manifestation of Synesthesia in the Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Sign Language UserPopulation</p>
<p>Zale Piepho <i>Thomas P. Franzem, Katherine Manning, Christie A. Bahlai, Kaitlin StackWhitney</i></p>	<p>Rochester Institute of Technology, University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, NY; Kent State University, Kent, OH</p>	<p>Campus bees and bee-friendly landscape practices</p>
<p>Victoria A. Popov <i>Edward G. Freedman & John J. Foxe</i></p>	<p>The Del Monte Institute for Neuroscience, University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, Rochester, NY</p>	<p>An acute exercise intervention to ameliorate behavioral and neurophysiological indices of inhibitory control deficits in schizophrenia: A Mobile Brain/Body Imaging (MoBI) study</p>
<p>Morgan H. Singleton <i>Michael W. Malloy, Sara K. Ture, Craig Morrell</i></p>	<p>Aab Cardiovascular Research Institute, University of Rochester School of Medicine andDentistry</p>	<p>Transcription Factor Myb Expression and Functions in Bone Marrow Megakaryocytes</p>
<p>Nicole Taboada <i>Rain Bosworth, Allison Fitch</i></p>	<p>Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY</p>	<p>Examining Kids' Intuitive Understanding of Mechanical Systems with a Gears Task</p>
<p>Lok Ming Tam <i>Catherine Beamish, Matthew D. Rand</i></p>	<p>University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, and University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, NY</p>	<p>Perspectives on myotoxicity: methylmercury perturbation of muscle development</p>

POSTER SESSIONS

Name	Institution	Poster Title
<p>Sunday D. Ubur <i>Denis Gracanin, Mohammed Faghally, Eugenia Rho</i></p>	<p>Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA</p>	<p>Enhancing Emotional Expression in Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) Captions for STEM Classrooms</p>
<p>Kara Vasilew <i>Johannes Platten, Kevin Brueck, Archana Jayaraman, Arjun Sharma, Markus Bosmann</i></p>	<p>Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine, Boston, MA; Center for Thrombosis and Hemostasis, University Medical Center, Mainz, Germany</p>	<p>The Role of Bacterial Long-Chain Polyphosphates in Legionella Infection of Macrophages</p>

**FRIDAY
AUG. 30
2024**

**Rochester
Institute of
Technology**

*National Technical
Institute for the Deaf*

52 Lomb Memorial Drive,
Rochester, NY 14623

**2024
Deaf ROC
Conference
29**

**LOCATED IN STUDENT
DEVELOPMENT CENTER 1300/1310**

8 - 9 a.m.

**Registration and
Continental Breakfast**

9 - 9:45 a.m.

**Unveiling Resilience: A Journey
through Graduate School -
Empowering Mental Wellness,
Self-Advocacy, and the Discovery
of New Dreams and Self-Potential**

Keynote

Amie Fornah Sankoh, PhD

9:45 - 10 a.m.

BREAK

10 - 10:45 a.m.

**Competency in Leadership:
Collaborative**

Keynote

Christopher "Chris" Woodfill, MS, MA

10:45 - 11:45 a.m.

DHH Scholars Panel Session

*Moderated by Camille Ouellette, ScM
Savannah Tellander, Hannah DeFelice,
Hayden Orr, and Morgan Singleton*

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52 Lomb Memorial Drive,
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**2024
Deaf ROC
Conference
30**

**LOCATED IN STUDENT
DEVELOPMENT CENTER 1300/1310**

12 - 1 p.m.

LUNCH

*On the second floor of the Student
Development Center*

**Undergraduate Mentorship
Panel Session**

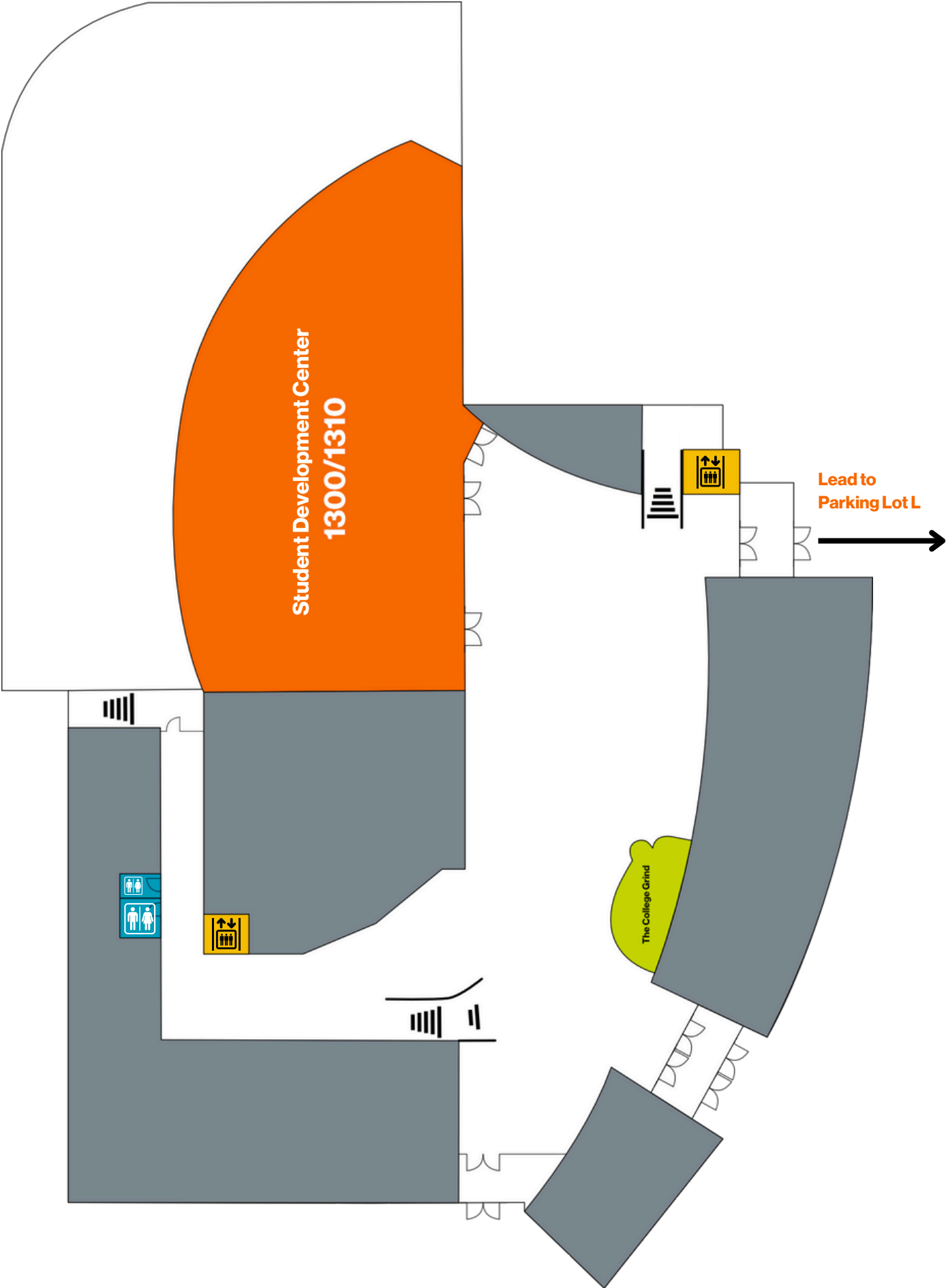
*Moderated by Alesia Allen, PhD
Rain Bosworth, PhD, Wendy
Dannels, Lea Michel, PhD, and
Allison Fitch, PhD*

1:15 - 2:15 p.m.

Closing Remarks

Gerry Buckley, EdD, and
Tiffany Panko, MD, MBA

2:15 - 2:45 p.m.



UNVEILING RESILIENCE: A JOURNEY THROUGH GRADUATE SCHOOL - EMPOWERING MENTAL WELLNESS, SELF-ADVOCACY, AND THE DISCOVERY OF NEW DREAMS AND SELF-POTENTIAL

Amie Fornah Sankoh, PhD

Keynote Presenter



First Deaf Black woman to earn a STEM doctorate

Amie Fornah-Sankoh acquired her PhD from the University of Tennessee's Department of Biochemistry & Cellular and Molecular Biology. Her scientific journey commenced at the Rochester Institute of Technology, where she earned Laboratory Science Technology and Biochemistry degrees. Before joining the University of Tennessee for her Ph.D. in 2017, Amie undertook various internships and participated in multiple research projects, further solidifying her commitment to scientific exploration.

During her time at the University of Tennessee, Amie achieved significant milestones. She secured a National Institute of Health (NIH)-supported Fellowship for her initial two years, followed by a three-year Graduate Research Fellowship from the National Science Foundation and another NIH predoctoral fellowship. Additionally, she authored four scientific publications, with more in progress, presented at a national meeting, and delivered multiple poster presentations.

9 - 9:45 a.m.

Student Development Center 1300/1310

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UNVEILING RESILIENCE: A JOURNEY THROUGH GRADUATE SCHOOL - EMPOWERING MENTAL WELLNESS, SELF-ADVOCACY, AND THE DISCOVERY OF NEW DREAMS AND SELF-POTENTIAL

Amie Fornah Sankoh, PhD

Keynote Presenter

9 - 9:30 a.m. | Student Development Center 1300/1310

Amie's PhD thesis explored biological communication, particularly focusing on the impact of hormones on plant-pathogen interactions. Communication is fundamental to the survival of any individual or population of organisms. As a Deaf person who has never taken the ability to communicate for granted, Amie especially believes in the adage that knowledge is far more valuable when properly shared. This belief has led her to engage in several activities that have a broader impact on the scientific community. Her research brings a unique perspective, particularly significant given the limited opportunities for young Deaf individuals in STEM, underscoring the importance of diverse voices in scientific inquiry.

Amie's life story is one of resilience, overcoming challenges originating from her Deafness during Sierra Leone's civil war. She had to overcome barriers to survival, education, and language acquisition, but instead of breaking her, these experiences fueled her determination and helped her thrive. Amie's passion for outreach drives her advocacy for Deaf and hard-of-hearing students in STEM, where she endeavors to offer them hands-on laboratory experiences, serving as both a role model and a catalyst for breaking barriers.

In 2023, Amie made history as the first Deaf Black woman to earn a STEM doctorate. This milestone reflects her journey of perseverance and achievement, reaching its culminating point in her selection as the featured speaker for her university's 2023 Graduate Hooding Ceremony. Her most fulfilling realization is that she can excel as a scientist and a community advocate.

Currently, Amie serves as a Senior Research Specialist at Dow Coating Materials, where she contributes to the development of innovative waterborne barrier coatings for paper, enhancing functional performance and promoting recyclability in paper-based packaging applications.

COMPETENCY IN LEADERSHIP: COLLABORATIVE

Christopher “Chris” Woodfill, MS, MA

Keynote Presenter



Executive Director of the New York State Interagency Coordinating Council on Services to Persons who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (IAC)

Chris Woodfill was appointed on January 2, 2024 by Governor Kathleen Hochul to the role of Executive Director of New York State Interagency Coordinating Council on Services to Persons who are Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (IAC). The office has since been renamed to New York State Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Office (The Office). The IAC is under the Office. Prior to working at the Office, Chris was the Associate Executive Director at Helen Keller National Center. Prior to that role, Chris was the Helen Keller National Center regional representative for New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands. Prior to his twelve years career at HKNC, he worked at Wisconsin School for the Deaf for thirteen years as a high school teacher.

10 - 10:45 a.m.

Student Development Center 1300/1310

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COMPETENCY IN LEADERSHIP: COLLABORATIVE

Christopher “Chris” Woodfill, MS, MA

Keynote Presenter

10 - 10:30 a.m. | Student Development Center 1300/1310

Chris has been active in both Deaf and DeafBlind communities at local, state, national and international levels for about three decades. Currently, he is an executive board member of the World Federation of the DeafBlind and a board member of DeafBlind Citizens in Action. In the past, he served as officers or board members of organizations such as Southern Lakes Association of the Deaf, Wisconsin School for the Deaf Alumni Association, Wisconsin School for the Deaf Foundation, Wisconsin Association of the Deaf, Wisconsin DeafBlind Technical Assistance Program, American Association of the DeafBlind and World Federation of the DeafBlind. He has been involved at committee levels with several organizations such as National Association of the Deaf and DeafBlind International among others.

One of his proudest achievements was his leading role as the Vice President of Wisconsin Association of the Deaf in passing the Wisconsin Sign Language Interpreter Licensure bill in 2010. This bill established the Sign Language Interpreter Council (of which he served on for two years prior to his move to New York). It also established a mechanism for licensing all sign language interpreters working for compensation in the state of Wisconsin.

Chris is a believer in servant leadership. He leads to serve the New York state Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing communities.

Chris identifies as a DeafBlind person now. Growing up, he identified as a Deaf person. After a diagnosis of Usher Syndrome at age 18, he underwent a 15-20 years journey transitioning his identity from a Deaf person to a DeafBlind person.

PANEL DISCUSSION | 10:45 - 11:45 a.m.

Student Development Center 1300/1310

DHH TRAINEES PANEL SESSION

Attend the "Deaf and Hard of Hearing Trainees Panel Session" to learn from the firsthand experiences of trainees navigating their professional journeys. Panelists will discuss the unique challenges they face, the strategies they've employed, and the successes they've achieved in their training programs. This session provides valuable perspectives and practical advice for both trainees and mentors alike.



Hannah DeFelice, BS

Bridges trainee and graduate assistant working with Dr. Carmody McCalley toward a Master's in Environmental Science.



Savannah Tellander, BA

A graduate research assistant at the NTID PLAY Lab and SPaCE Center, working towards a Master's in Experimental Psychology at RIT. With a BA in Religious Studies from CSU Northridge and interdisciplinary training from UCSB, she brings over five years of experience in early childhood education, psychological assessment, and social services for d/Deaf populations.



Morgan Singleton

U-RISE scholar and senior undergraduate student at RIT in pursuit of obtaining a PhD in biomedical sciences. Extensive research experience in cellular biology at Dr. Gary Skuse's laboratory to study the effects of chemotherapeutic treatments. Also worked at Dr. Craig Morrell's laboratory through the Summer Scholars Program.

PANEL DISCUSSION | 10:45 - 11:45 a.m.

Student Development Center 1300/1310

DHH TRAINEES PANEL SESSION

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Hayden Robert Orr

U-RISE scholar specializing in Natural Language Processing (NLP) with a focus on Sign Language Recognition (SLR), Research Assistant at the Computational Linguistics and Speech Processing (CLaSP) Lab and Deaf Studies Laboratory, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

FACILITATOR



Camille Ouellete, ScM

Senior Lecturer, Department of Science & Mathematics, National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology. She teaches and tutors Deaf and hard-of-hearing students majoring in biology and health sciences.

PANEL DISCUSSION | 1:15 - 2:15 p.m.
Student Development Center 1300/1310

UNDERGRADUATE MENTORSHIP

The "Undergraduate Mentorship" breakout session will provide valuable strategies for effectively mentoring deaf and hard of hearing undergraduate students. Attendees will explore best practices for communication, creating inclusive learning environments, and supporting academic and personal growth. This session is essential for anyone looking to foster successful mentor-mentee relationships.



Rain Bosworth, PhD

Associate Professor at RIT/NTID. She is a deaf experimental psychologist, studying development of perception and language in infants and children at the newly-founded Perception, Language and Attention in Youth (PLAY) Lab



Wendy Dannels

Associate Research Professor and the Director of the XR Accessibility Solutions Laboratory, NTID Deaf Health Care and Biomedical Science Hub, Principal Investigator of a project, "Evaluating the Use of Mixed Reality Smart Glasses for Real-Time Captioning Display and Interpreting Services," awarded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research associated with the Administration for Community Living within the Department of Health and Human Services



Lea Vacca Michel, PhD

Professor of Chemistry and Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives for the College of Science, Rochester Institute of Technology, Chair of ASBMB Maximizing Access Committee

PANEL DISCUSSION | 1:15 - 2:15 p.m.*Student Development Center 1300/1310***UNDERGRADUATE MENTORSHIP**

The "Undergraduate Mentorship" breakout session will provide valuable strategies for effectively mentoring deaf and hard of hearing undergraduate students. Attendees will explore best practices for communication, creating inclusive learning environments, and supporting academic and personal growth. This session is essential for anyone looking to foster successful mentor-mentee relationships.

**Allison Fitch, PhD**

Assistant professor in the Department of Psychology in the College of Liberal Arts. Prior to joining the faculty at RIT, she completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Boston University, and received her PhD in Developmental and Brain Sciences from the University of Massachusetts Boston

FACILITATOR**Alesia Allen, PhD**

Assistant Vice President for NTID Diversity and Inclusion, Bachelor's degree in Psychology from RIT/NTID and a master's degree and PhD in clinical psychology from Gallaudet University

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