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ATS ➤ CEES ➤ IMPACT ➤ TAP

Advancement and Transition Services
Year in Review 2021-2022



A MESSAGE FROM DR. CHRISTI CARNAHAN

As I reflect on the past year, it is clear to me that the important work of ATS starts with the trusting relationships we have with our students, associates, families, staff, volunteers, community partners and supporters. These powerful relationships allow us to continue to improve outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and to promote inclusion in our community. We are changing the lives of the people in our programs, while also changing our culture and creating a community in which all people are valued. Two of the most important ways we are building a more inclusive community today and for the future are through hiring UC student workers as mentors and coaches and providing field service opportunities for pre-professionals.. To this end, I want to share a brief story about one of the newest students to join our team:

Recently, I was talking with a Kallie, a doctoral student in Education who is also working in one of our ATS programs. During the conversation, she expressed that she was thinking about changing her focus of study. Kallie's words were powerful; she said, "I entered my program interested in one area, but my experience in ATS has opened my eyes to something amazing. I see the power of communication interventions for young adults, especially these innovative approaches. Honestly, what's happening here could be life changing for so many individuals with disabilities. I really want to be involved in and focus on this work."

Kallie's story is important because it highlights the experience of the nearly 150 student employees and volunteers involved in ATS each year. These undergraduate and graduate students are future teachers, therapists, doctors, and business owners who will eventually be leaders in Cincinnati, the United States, and internationally. Their experiences with ATS influence their interests in terms of what they study, but more importantly, these experiences influence who they are as people at a deep level.

There are 85 student workers, 65 volunteers, and 170 young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities involved in ATS each year, and we are committed to supporting all of these young people on their journeys - together, they are the heart of ATS. The relationships they build, the communities they create, and ways in which they learn from each other highlight the essence and importance of our work. To be clear, our mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities, and to do this, we must prepare the leaders of tomorrow, prioritize inclusion, and create communities in which all people are seen and valued.

In the coming year, we will focus on our strategic priorities, with special attention to sustainability, innovative programing, and becoming a leader in research. Throughout our annual report, you will find examples of the work already happening in each of these areas. As you read, I invite you to consider ways you might support ATS – our work, our research, and our students and associates. One thing is for sure - we are making great progress because of our generous donors and supporters. Thank you for helping us make a difference.

Respectfully,

Christi Carnahan
Director, Advancement & Transition Services

2021-2022 OUR YEAR OF PROGRESS

Advancement and Transition Services (ATS) is committed to improving outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) through innovative programming driven by research and best practices. The mission of ATS is to provide meaningful, quality life experiences for people with IDD. Our students and associates had a great year becoming more independent through engaging opportunities in our community.



DEDICATED PARTNERSHIPS

The ATS students and associates would not find success without the support from the University, the College of Education, Criminal Justice, Human Services and IT, the School of Education and the many dedicated employment and community partners providing inclusive internship and employment opportunities. A special thanks goes out to these amazing community partners.

[Discover more about our partners here.](#)

RESEARCH & COLLABORATION

ATS is committed to developing innovative, research-based programming for people with IDD through collaborative efforts. The ATS Research Network, established in 2019 and is comprised of UC faculty and students from across the University and Cincinnati Children's Medical Center, has several on-going research projects. In addition, the UC IDD Collaborative was established in 2022 to explore how the University of Cincinnati and UC Health can partner to improve outcomes for adults with IDD through research, education, and service.

Microteaching: Supporting New Teacher Professional Development

Special Education faculty, Dr. Kathryn Doyle and Dr. Stephen Kroeger, continue to examine the influences of microteaching in the CEES program. Microteaching is an accessible process that supports instructional improvement by practicing evidence-based and high leverage strategies. Preservice teachers, working with a small group of peers, engage in a four-phase process that includes planning, teaching, as well as, individual and group reflection.

Teachers use the opportunity to explore a teaching strategy that is responsive to student needs in the context of critical friends. As a result of this work Kate and Steve have published peer reviewed articles (Kroeger, Doyle, Carnahan, & Benson, 2020), contributed a chapter to an upcoming edited book about high leverage practices for intensive disabilities (McLeskey, Billingsley, & Kroeger, in press), and presented their work at numerous local and national conferences.

Outcomes and Social Validity of the Transition & Access Program (TAP)

Psychology professor, Dr. Lori Vincent, is leading a five year longitudinal study with the Transition and Access Program (TAP) staff to evaluate the student outcomes and social validity of the program. The purpose of the current program evaluation is to (1) evaluate outcomes for students who participate in TAP; (2) to evaluate the social validity of the TAP Course Content; and (3) to understand what population of students with disabilities are most likely to be successful with this specific program which includes a hybrid of TAP specific and inclusive university activities.



Science/Technology/Engineering/ Math (STEM) Careers for People with IDD

Developing employment skills and creating innovative career pathways of interest are critical components in all of the ATS programs. ATS staff and faculty continue to collaborate with UC faculty from the School of Engineering and the School of Education to utilize evidence-based predictors and practices to increase employment opportunities in STEM fields for people with IDD by systematically addressing participation barriers and implementing, refining, and disseminating these efforts in Ohio and across the nation. The ATS team, with the support of various state and national colleagues have been awarded the following grants to support our STEM efforts:

- Ohio Dean's Compact Grant will allow us to modify our current Developing Spatial Thinking curriculum and Self-determination curriculum to be more accessible. In addition, the grant will allow for two inclusive STEM work-based learning experiences to be developed for our high school students with the intent to expand opportunities to our other programs.
- Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Summer Expansion Grant allowed us to expand our summer high school program to embed self-determination skills in the program components and to add exploration of STEM career pathways.
- NSF INCLUDES Planning Grant allowed us to build state and nation-wide systems for STEM post-secondary pathways for individuals with IDD.



Ohio Statewide Consortium of Inclusive Postsecondary Programs

Dr. Diane Weinbrandt has been engaged in research with the Ohio's Statewide Consortium (OSC) of inclusive postsecondary programs. Their research project involved interviewing OSC staff, students, parents and employers to gain a better understanding of these key stakeholders' perspectives of OSCs alignment to Think College Standards for Inclusive Postsecondary Programs. The team is co-authoring five publications in peer-reviewed journals.

ATS Communication Research Team

Special Education faculty members, Dr. Christina Carnahan and Dr. Kate Doyle, have been working collaboratively with Literacy and Language Studies faculty member Dr. Allison Breit for the past three years on the ATS Communication Research team. This year, the communication team has added Stephanie Bare, Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), to support the work as well as three Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) students. Their focus has been on implementing evidence-based practices that target communication instruction and support for individuals with complex needs across ATS programming. The team has been working on refining book club and texting protocols across ATS with an emphasis on staff training.

UC IDD Collaborative

ATS and UC Health's Timothy Freeman Center, a clinic for adults with IDD, have been exploring ways to partner to improve outcomes for adults with IDD and their families as they transition into adulthood. Our aim is to increase availability and access to high quality services by aligning disability organizations and programs with best practices. The vision of the UC IDD Collaborative is to align a network of organizations with standards of best practices to improve life outcomes for adults with IDD and amplify each other's impact through research, teaching and service. The mission of the UC IDD Collaborative is to systematically improve the quality of life for adults with IDD by creating a community in which they have access to best-in-class opportunities and supports through innovative and collaborative efforts.



Collaboration for Employment & Education Synergy (CEES)

The Collaboration for Employment & Education Synergy (CEES) partners with local school districts to provide transition services to over 120 high school students with IDD. This year, CEES Students engaged in work-based learning experiences on campus for the United States Geological Survey (USGS), STEMternship (Introduction to STEM Pathways and Concepts), Hampton Inn, CVS, Aramark, and many other community integrated work opportunities.

CEES programming is rooted in the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction. Students engage in meaningful goal setting activities to support their transition from high school to the adult world. Curriculum is tailored to support students in achieving their self-directed goals. Students choose to focus on various domains, for example, development of pre-employment skills, budgeting to live independently, post-secondary exploration and research, development of social communication skills to increase social networking and development of peer relationships, and self-regulation and social emotional learning.

Field Service Opportunities for UC Students

CEES partners with the School of Education and provided seven student teaching opportunities. CEES student teachers work with students from multiple school districts and support these students in internships in an inclusive setting and engage students in curriculum to set personal goals and increase their social communication and vocational skills. In addition, CEES student teachers gain experience with lesson planning, job coaching, and creating goals for their students' individual education programs (IEPs).

CEES also partners with the College of Allied Health Sciences and provides field service experience for Communication Sciences and Disorder (CSD) students. This is a great opportunity for these pre-service professionals because they get hands-on experiences to implement communication interventions with CEES students and a unique opportunity to collaborate with special education pre-service teachers to develop a comprehensive curriculum to support the students.





Local School Districts

Special thanks to all our partnering school districts during the 2021-2022 school year: Deer Park, Fairfield, Maderia, Mariemont, Milford, Monroe, Mount Healthy, Warren County ESC, Winton Woods, Wyoming, Monroe, Northwest and Colerain, Loveland and Indian Hill.

Why is CEES Beneficial for Students and School Districts?

- CEES provides opportunities for students to engage in work-based learning in a variety of internships in an integrated setting.
- CEES develops self-determination, social communication, and vocational skills.
- CEES incorporates Pre-Employment Transition Services and Developing Spatial Skills Curricula to support exploration of STEM pathways.
- CEES students navigate and become a member of a new community.





IMPACT Innovation

IMPACT Innovation is a year-round program at UC for adults with autism and/or communication, behavior, or sensory differences. IMPACT associates participate in meaningful, inclusive experiences throughout the day on UC's campus and the Cincinnati community.

The 2021-2022 year was full of growth and new experiences. The IMPACT team continues to develop innovative programming so that associates can build important skills to make meaningful connections and engage in the community. IMPACT is also one of the largest employers of student workers on campus employing 45 UC students and graduate assistants from various majors including Education, IT, Nursing, Physical Therapy, Speech and Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Public Health, Aerospace Science, and Psychology.

Enrollment

25 adults attend IMPACT on a weekly basis. Capacity is limited due to space and funding and currently there is a waitlist.

Employment

Employment development and the development of critical job skills are important components in IMPACT. Many associates engaged in paid employment while others are working on vocational skills development and vocational exploration at various community sites.

- Many associates had new opportunities at several different sites, including Ace Hardware, Adrian Durbin Florist, Aramark/UC Dining Services, Cincinnati Preschool Promise, Clifton Market, CVS, Keystone Bar & Grill, Teachers Café, UC Bearcat Pantry, UC Biology Lab, UC Bookstore, UC CECH Library, UC Facilities, UC Greenhouse, and UC Human Resources.
- One employment highlight for the year was that one of our associates was employed (and continues to be) by the UC Provost's Office for Undergraduate Academic Affairs; harnessing this young man's detail-oriented skills has had a tremendous positive impact on their office's workload.
- Travel training was introduced and has become essential to the vocational development program. Associates are using the UC Shuttle and the Cincinnati Metro system to access internship placements on and off campus.
- IMPACT provides Individual Employment Supports to seven IMPACT Associates working in the following positions: Aramark/UC Dining Services, UC Police Division and UC E-Curriculum.

Why is IMPACT Important? What People are Saying!

“ I am beyond grateful for the IMPACT Program at U.C. Alan has acquired social and other skills that I never dreamed were possible. He is very happy and feels like part of the community. ”

~ Gretchen Heinrich, parent of IMPACT Associate

“ Our family is so thankful for Impact. William loves the program and it has changed the quality of his and our lives. ”

~ Valerie Allendorf, parent of IMPACT Associate

“ IMPACT is an exceptional program that better the lives of individuals with disabilities. As a staff member, I have built bonds and skills that will benefit me for the rest of my life. I feel so privileged to work with this amazing team making a difference every day. ”

~ Kylee Fury, IMPACT Graduate Assistant



Program Highlights

This year, IMPACT partnered with several organizations to provide meaningful, high quality programming. Associates enjoyed classes with New Leaf Kitchen, Ensemble Theatre, and Art with Intention. In addition to these partnerships, the IMPACT team introduced several new activities to increase meaningful communication. During the Cooperative Community Class, associates practiced self-determination skills along with accessing the community in new and different ways such as planning an event, writing letters or making gifts for friends. Associates also practiced conversations with peers and community members along with communicating by texting. Other great additions to the program were Fun Fridays and Shuttle and Community Safety Class. Associates and staff safely engaged in off-campus adventures exploring local favorites like Great American Ballpark, Cincinnati Art Museum, Eden Park, Findlay Market, Washington Park and the Cincinnati Zoo.

Transportation

Our partnership with UC Night Ride shifted this year when they changed their method of operation and could no longer share their fleet of vehicles. While this presented challenges, UC generously donated two vans to IMPACT so that services could seamlessly continue! IMPACT recently started a third route and now transports 14 associates to and from campus every day. Many thanks to the university for this very important donation!

Collaborations

IMPACT Innovation has several partnerships that advance research, education and service.

- Fifteen Special Education students completed their field service requirements working with associates and staff in the program.
- Seven Communication and Sciences Disorder students supported the communication interventions and research initiatives.
- Two Physical Therapy students and two Occupational Therapy students collaborated to improve health and wellness experiences for associates.
- IMPACT hosted three students from Mexico in the Honors Exchange Program to support programming.



Transition & Access Program (TAP):

The Transition & Access Program (TAP) is a four-year residential, college certificate program for young adults with IDD. TAP students embrace college life and live, work, learn, and lead on UC's campus and become independent, contributing members of the Bearcat community. During the 2021-2022 academic year, 25 TAP students were enrolled and three students graduated. These Bearcats made some very bold achievements.

Student Leadership

TAP students are leaders in the community acting as ambassadors for the program in addition to following their interests.

- One student served as an ambassador for CECH.
- One student served as a board member for the Medical Symphony Orchestra.
- Two students consistently planned social engagement with peers.
- One student gave a speech at the 2022 Red & Black Blast.
- One student was hired to job coach our CEES high school students.
- One student's internship focused on advocating for people with disabilities.

Academic Achievements

- TAP sophomores, Alpha Ma and Dana Laster, were recipients of the TAP into the Future Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to TAP students who exemplifies academic achievement, demonstrates leadership, and strives to engage in the community.
- Seventeen students made the Dean's List.

Promoting Inclusion and Diversity

- Elective courses spanned 15 different Academic Programs across the University
- TAP students participated in 20 campus clubs and club sports
- 1,204 volunteer coaching hours by 38 student volunteers in TAP Courses Campus Coaching, TAP Activities, Social Groups, and Independent Living Coaching
- 24 paid student workers as academic, vocational, and life coaches
- Student workers and volunteers from over 23 different academic programs across the university



Why is TAP one of the best college options for students with disabilities?

“ I like UC because it is a nice campus that is easy to get around and I feel like I am starting to make a lot of new friends already. I chose UC because TAP was the best program for me out of all of the other programs in the country that I was looking at for school. ”

~ Shelby Akin, TAP Freshman

“ We are truly pleased with the growth we've witnessed since Dana began her college career in TAP. TAP has truly helped Dana to build confidence, increase her independence and self-advocacy, while building healthy living skills and social networks along the way! Thanks to TAP, this girl is doing her thing!! She is living, loving and experiencing an awesome college life!

~ Della Laster, parent of TAP student

Employment and Community Partners

ATS has established many new and exciting partnerships this year to continue to support TAP students in their person-centered career pathways. These include: Aronoff Center, Ensemble Theatre, Gorman Farms, UC HR office, CECH Dean's Office, and UC's new Bearcat Package Center. ATS and TAP staff continue to develop person-centered career pathways in areas of interests of our students including Animal Care, Childcare, Creative Arts, Horticulture, Hospitality and Customer Service, Office/Clerical, and STEM.

TAP collaborates with several college partners across the university supporting TAP students to become more independent along with providing field service experiences for UC students. Four Communication Sciences and Disorders seniors collaborated with TAP to complete their Capstone Projects. In addition, the Masters of Occupational Therapy program provided Level 1 field placements in the TAP Daily Living Courses and the College of Nursing students taught the TAP First Aide Basics Course.



Alumni Accolades

The 2022 TAP graduates are making a bold impact in our community. Alex Bentley moved to Florida and is working for Disney. Jack LaFrance lives with friends in the Clifton community and working for Children's Hospital and UC Campus Services. Duke Mitchell also lives with friends in the Clifton community and works for Aramark/UC Catering Services.

- 36 graduates as of 2022
- 88% of graduates are employed or continuing education
- 52% of graduates are living independently

I have so much fun at UC. I get to make new friends and watch some sports games and go to Newport. My favorite thing about TAP is talking to my friends and to the teachers, too.

~Alpha Ma, TAP Sophomore



Welcome to the
**RED AND BLACK
BLAST**



THE 2022 RED & BLACK BLAST

The 2022 Red & Black Blast was one great night at Fifth Third Arena! Over 250 guests attended the event and thanks to our generous supporters, over \$61,000 was raised! Guests enjoyed a gourmet meal by Aramark Executive Chefs and had fun bidding on silent auction art and prizes. In addition, Provost Valerio Ferme started the evening with welcoming remarks and guests also heard meaningful stories from ATS students, staff and faculty. Two extraordinary women were also honored for their dedication to ATS and people with IDD; Dr. Mary Boat, director of the School of Education, and Shelley Goering, CEO of 55 North.

Many thanks for the support from our generous sponsors: the College of Education, Criminal Justice, Human Services and Information Technology, AKM Care, Aramark, Gries Financial Partners, Terri Hogan, Impact Autism, Keeper's Turf, Diana and David O'Brien, Manuel D. & Rhoda Mayerson Foundation, The Boat Family, Big Blue Canopy, Contemporary Cabinetry East, LADD, Sheriff Charmaine McGuffey, The McPherson Family, The Molloy Family, Mary Ronan and Carl Grueninger, Total Education Solutions, University of Cincinnati College of Allied Health Sciences, and Wright-Patt Credit Union.

If you weren't able to join the festivities this year, you can check out the Blast here! We hope you will join us next year. In the meantime, please support ATS by connecting with us via social media or our website, or by making a contribution!



ATS FINANCIALS

Red & Black Blast : \$61,000 raised

**Endowment Principle
Contributions: \$68,214**

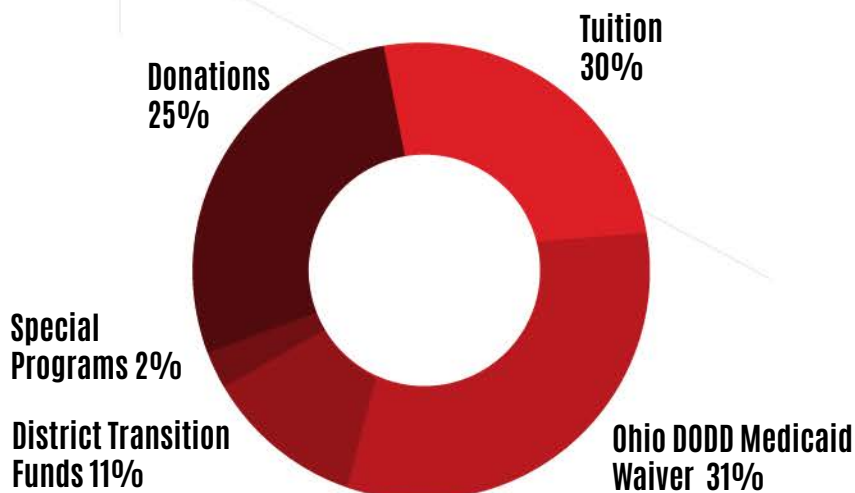
Foundation Grants: \$90,000

Pledges: \$35,000

Revenue:

Tuition: \$383,040
Ohio DODD Medicaid Waiver: \$401,529
District Transition Funds: \$147,650
Special Programs: \$28,269
Donations: \$327,952

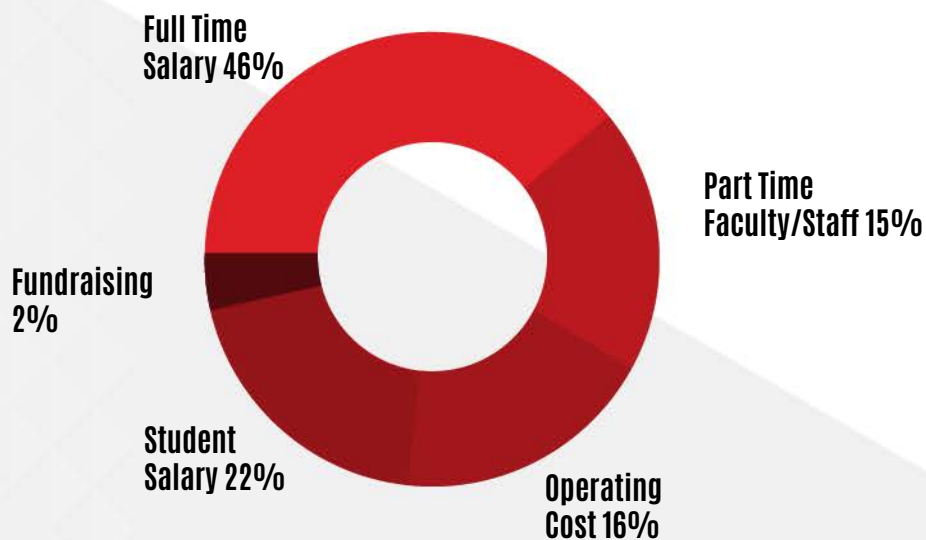
Total: \$1,288,440



Expenses:

Full Time Salary: \$535,236
Part Time Faculty/Staff: \$173,663
Student Salary: \$255,434
Operating Costs: \$182,858
Fundraising: \$17,987

Total: \$1,165,179



ATS VISION, MISSION, AND CORE VALUES

Our Vision: To promote inclusive communities where people with diverse abilities can thrive in all aspects of their lives supported by innovative programming driven by research and collaboration.

Our Mission: To create meaningful, life-changing experiences for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) through innovative research, education and service.

Our Core Values:

01.

We inspire positive change.

We create a safe place to nurture personal growth by making intentional decisions to break down barriers, model accountability, and promote inclusion throughout the communities we touch.

02.

We promote self-determination and self-advocacy.

We provide experiences that cultivate freedom and authority for individuals to make choices and decisions to create happy, productive, and well-rounded lives.

03.

We build relationships of trust.

We believe trusting relationships are the foundation for growth and learning. We recognize each other's unique strengths and challenges and use these to guide our interactions. We listen carefully, communicate openly, and respond thoughtfully.

04.

We are dedicated to research and evidence-based practice.

We are dedicated to research designed to cultivate rich opportunities for learning and growth, and using evidence based, individualized supports to create inclusive communities and improve the quality of life for all. Research drives our practice, and practice drives our research.

05.

We see and value each other's humanity.

We believe that all people are contributing members of their communities, and that dignity comes from the opportunity to engage in meaningful relationships with others. We see beyond labels, barriers, or superficial challenges to the unique strengths and gifts of each individual.

Our Strategic Priorities and Goals

Become a Leader in Research

Our global aim is to be a research center that generates and implements practice-based research to enhance the lives of transition age adolescents and adults with IDD.

1. Systematize processes across ATS research studies.
2. Align budgets to prioritize practice-based research.
3. Create a system for disseminating data/outcomes to a variety of stakeholders.

Establish Sustainable Employment Pathways

Employment is a continuum that includes work-based learning experiences, community integrated internships, and paid employment. Establishing sustainable employment pathways promotes independence and builds inclusive communities.

1. Develop programming that leads to sustainable employment post- program completion.
2. Recruit and maintain employment partners.

Ensure Long-term Sustainability

Sustainability is having the breadth to innovate, operate efficiently, and fulfill the need for our services in our community. Sustainability is financial success and having sufficient resources to achieve our mission and make strategic decisions for the future.

1. Financial Sustainability: Ensure the financial success of ATS by securing diverse funding sources/mechanisms to fund ongoing and future initiatives.
2. People and Knowledge: Ensure the sustainability of our programs and initiatives by employing a team dedicated to the ATS vision, mission, and core values.
3. Community Sustainability: Engage with stakeholders (students, families, alumni, ATS participants, employers, community partners, and donors) to ensure awareness.

Develop Innovative Programming

ATS is committed to developing inclusive, engaging, meaningful and evidence-based social, vocational and educational programming to improve outcomes for people with IDD.

1. Develop a sustainable, fluid staffing model that allows for the implementation of evidence-based practices and innovative research across programs.

Learn More

For more information about the ATS programs and research, please visit:

<http://cech.uc.edu/schools/education/ats.html>

THE DEDICATED ATS TEAM



Christi Carnahan / ATS Director

Dr. Christi Carnahan is Associate Professor of Special Education in the School of Education, College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services at the University of Cincinnati. Additionally, she is the director of Advancement and Transition Services within the School of Education. Christi's research interests include literacy and communication interventions for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and other complex communication and behavioral support needs, and creating efficient and effective instructional practices across the lifespan. She has a strong history of mentoring students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Christi has also published in journals such as *Exceptional Children*, *Journal of Special Education*, and *Focus on Autism and Developmental Disabilities*. She is also the co-author of two books including *Quality Literacy Instruction for Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder* and *Facilitating Evidence Based Practice for Students with ASD: A Classroom Observation Tool for Building Quality Education*. Christi and her husband have three children and enjoy traveling as a family.



Shelby Collopy / ATS Business Manager

Shelby Collopy has her Master's in Business Administration from the University of Cincinnati's Carl H. Lindner College of Business. She has been part of the ATS Team since 2019. Prior to working with ATS, Shelby was a member of the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning's Business Office. She also has experience in early intervention therapy for children with autism spectrum disorder and an undergraduate degree in Psychology from the UC. As Business Manager of ATS, Shelby merges her business skills with her passion for helping people. When not working, loves to cheer on the Bearcats, and hopes to visit all 50 states by the time she turns 50.



Sadie Everett / ATS Community Relations Manager

Sadie Everett holds a bachelor's degree from Miami University's Richard T. Farmer School of Business and a Master of Arts in Teaching from National-Louis University. Sadie has served as an Adjunct Professor in the School of Education and now as the Community Relations Manager for ATS at the University of Cincinnati. Sadie supports the marketing, communications, and fundraising efforts for ATS. Outside of work, you can find Sadie on a field or court watching her sons play sports. She also enjoys vacationing to the beach or mountains, exploring the great parks of Cincinnati, and watching football with her husband and boys.



Diane Weinbrandt / ATS Director of Community Relations and Job Development

Diane Weinbrandt earned her doctorate at the University of Cincinnati in Special Education and has been with ATS since 2012 in various roles. Her research interests involve supporting individuals with IDD in postsecondary education and improving employment outcomes including access to STEM pathways. Diane also studies mindfulness, enjoys cooking, and savors spending time with friends and family.

Collaboration for Employment & Education Synergy (CEES)



Cadi Dart / CEES Director

Cadi Dart brings transition services expertise to the ATS/CEES Team. Six years ago, Cadi collaborated with ATS colleagues, community partners, and local school districts to pilot CEES and established the high-quality transition program for high school students with disabilities at UC. For the past three years, Cadi's career took her in a different direction, and she worked for Warren County Educational Service Center as an intervention specialist and transition coordinator. Cadi is excited to be reunited with the ATS team to continue her work with developing CEES into a valued program for the community. When Cadi is not working, she enjoys time with her wonderful husband, Garrick, and two sons Noah (13) and Julian (3) in Clarksville, Ohio. She loves adventure and travel and takes every opportunity to show her kids the awesome world we live in.

IMPACT Innovation



Lee Ann Emmons / IMPACT Director

Lee Ann Emmons has over 20 years of experience working in the field of developmental disabilities. She has managed residential, employment and adult day services for adults with IDD for private, public and non-profit agencies. She was most recently employed by the Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities where she worked for 13 years providing oversight to the adult day program and supporting the Butler County provider community. Lee Ann is active on the Policy to Practice Committee for the Southwest Regional Autism Advisory Committee and also serves on a statewide work group focusing on improvement and accessibility of day services for individuals with communication and behavioral challenges. Lee Ann has a bachelor's degree in special education from Morehead State University and a master's degree in Special Education from the University of Cincinnati. Lee Ann lives in Cincinnati where she enjoys spending time with her three adult children and dog and exploring everything the city has to offer. She enjoys cooking and entertaining and planning her next travel adventure.



JoAnn Ramsey / IMPACT Program Coordinator

JoAnn Ramsey brings so much experience to the ATS/IMPACT team. She began her career as a para-professional and worked for 11 years at the Warren County Educational Service Center (WCESC) working with children with intense behavioral needs. After departing WCESC, she decided to join the ATS team at UC as the program coordinator for IMPACT Innovation. She finds working with the IMPACT associates extremely rewarding and loves coming to work every day. When JoAnn is not at work, she is juggling a busy life as a foster mom. For fun, she enjoys listening to a good live jazz band, singing a few notes at Karaoke, and her absolute favorite pastime is dancing!

Transition & Access Program (TAP)



Kaite Norland / TAP Director

Kaite Norland joins the ATS team as the Director of TAP from The College of the Florida Keys where she served as the Director of Student Success Services. In her role, she worked as the director of Project ACCESS, an inclusive postsecondary education program for students with intellectual disabilities and autism that provides comprehensive and structured programs that include academics, social activities, employment experience, and independent living. She was also responsible for grant management, student accessibility services, career and internship development, and many other student success-focused service areas. Katie is passionate about working in inclusive postsecondary education and having the opportunity to advocate for students with disabilities with the belief that education is for all. Her professional experiences extend beyond inclusive education with a background in marketing, social media, hospitality, and event management. Outside of work, Katie enjoys spending time with her partner Collin and their dog Finn. After relocating from Key West, Florida, they are enjoying getting acclimated to life in Cincinnati.



Meg Brady / TAP Vocational Coordinator

Meg Brady holds a master's degree in Special Education from Miami University. This is her eleventh year in serving individuals with disabilities in Transition and Adult Service Programs. Her roles have included Intervention Specialist, Program Coordinator, Program Supervisor, Transition Coordinator, and now TAP Vocational Coordinator. Meg believes in providing the best services and support to ensure individuals succeed in achieving their post-secondary goals and successful outcomes. She is committed to finding ways that individuals can attain personal satisfaction through participation in their communities. Meg supports person-centered planning and lines of communication and collaboration between individuals, families, agencies, educational programs, and other supporting systems. Meg lives in Lebanon Ohio with her husband, daughter, mother, and dog Max. Her son and daughter-in-law live in Cincinnati, and her other daughter, son-in-law and grandson live in Indianapolis. Meg enjoys the outside and exploring nature with her family and friends. She enjoys traveling internationally and within the US and has a goal to visit all 63 US National Parks with her husband.



Dani Reiss / TAP Academic Coordinator

Danielle 'Dani' Reiss is the Academic Advisor and Academic Coordinator for the Transition & Access Program. Dani is an instructor for TAP, as well as a supervisor to undergraduate student workers and volunteers. As a licensed intervention specialist, she has over 10 years of experience teaching in the local Cincinnati community. She started her education in Columbus, Ohio at the Ohio State University, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Sciences. She then moved back to Cincinnati to attend UC, where she earned her master's degree in special education. Dani lives north of Cincinnati with her partner, Matt, and their two children Vada (8) and Shai (6). Dani is active in her local community, where she and her family like to volunteer, explore the arts, and take advantage of a 4-season climate.



Kerri Wolfer / TAP Campus Coordinator

Kerri Wolfer, MSW, LISW is a Licensed Independent Social Worker experienced in working in a variety of settings with diverse populations across different age spans. She holds a Master of Social Work degree from Michigan State University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Miami University. She is an annual adjunct instructor at the University of Cincinnati and serves as the Campus Life Coordinator for TAP where she is responsible for collaborating in the development and management of the social learning instruction and initiatives as well as participating in the strategic development of the program. Kerri enjoys spending her free time doing fun activities with her husband and 4 children.



Jill Benzinger / TAP Faculty

Jill Benzinger is a licensed occupational therapist with over six years of experience working in a variety of settings. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees from Xavier University where she completed research on how the environment impacts participation of young children with cerebral palsy. She currently works as a school-based occupational therapist working with students of diverse needs building sensory processing, executive function, and motor skills. Jill also works at a local inpatient rehab hospital serving patients in both individual treatments and group settings. She also has experience in acute care, hand therapy, and mental health settings. Jill is also the Member Development Coordinator for the Ohio Occupational Therapy Association: Southwest District. Jill is passionate about working with students in TAP because of her Uncle David. David was born with Down Syndrome and spent his adult life working at New Perceptions, Inc. in Northern Kentucky. Upon his passing, they established the David G. Benzinger Employee of the Month to recognize New Perceptions' employees who have adopted David's positive work attitude and his spirit of self-motivation, persistence, and joy of living. In her free time, Jill enjoys reading, watching FCC soccer games, and playing volleyball with her friends.



Lisa Claypool / TAP Faculty

Lisa has 15 years of experience working with students with disabilities. She worked in middle schools in Charleston, SC as an intervention specialist and reading specialist and in a high school in Cincinnati as an intervention specialist. She joined the TAP team this year and is enjoying working with all of the students on their academics during Academic Support class. Lisa has a bachelor's degree in special education from Ohio University and a master's degree in literacy education from The Citadel. Lisa lives in Cincinnati with her husband and two young children.



Amy Hippert / TAP Faculty

Amy Hippert has 15 years of experience working with students with developmental disabilities. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Wittenberg University and holds a K-12 Intervention Specialist license. Amy earned a masters in Educational Leadership from the University of Cincinnati and an Autism Spectrum Certificate. Amy helped with the TAP program in summer 2021 as part of her Transition-to-Work endorsement from University of Toledo. She currently works as an intervention specialist in a self-contained resource room in Fairfield City Schools. Amy lives in West Chester with her three kids Jacob (8), Jordan (6), and Johnny (4), and her cat Goose. In her free time, Amy enjoys working out, reading, drawing, and loves to vacation at the beach.



Beth-Anne Pantazi / TAP Faculty

Beth Pantazi has been an Occupational Therapist for 18 years. She has worked primarily in school-based practice but has experience working in outpatient pediatrics, skilled nursing facilities, home healthcare, acute care, early intervention, and aquatic therapy. Beth works during the school year in K-12 schools and specializes in middle school, high school, and post-secondary age groups. She enjoys mentoring new occupational therapists and advocating for equity in accessibility for her students. Most recently, Beth joined the TAP faculty team and teaches Daily Living Skills. In December 2020 Beth earned her M.Ed. from Bowling Green State University in Special Education and Assistive Technology and is currently pursuing a master's certificate in Special Education Leadership from University of Cincinnati with an expected graduation date of May 2023. She earned her undergraduate degree in Occupational Therapy from Quinnipiac University in January 2004. Beth lives in Milford with her husband Nick, son Andrew, and puggle Charlie. She loves to run outside on a sunny day, travel to visit family, and as a native Rhode Islander, she loves a day at the beach.



Alison Rubel / TAP Faculty

Alison has over 15 years of experience teaching students with developmental disabilities in both K-12 and post-secondary settings. She earned a Master of Science in Education from Purdue University and holds a K-12 special education license in Indiana. Alison began her career as a special educator with the Carmel Clay Schools in Carmel, Indiana. During this time, she served on an interdisciplinary committee to develop a curriculum for district K-5 special education classrooms. She was responsible for the development and implementation of academic and behavioral interventions for students with multiple disabilities as well as the management of instructional assistants in the special education setting. Shortly after moving to Cincinnati, Alison became an adjunct instructor with the Transition and Access Program and is currently in her seventh year. She teaches courses including College Success, Writing Basics, College Writing, First Aid Basics, and Financial Literacy. Alison lives near Kings Island with her husband, two daughters, and two Schnauzers. She loves developing new recipes, gardening, and spending time with family at her favorite Cincinnati spots, Pyramid Hill and Washington Park.



Terri Schermerhorn / TAP Faculty

Terri joined the TAP team Fall 2022 and is currently an adjunct professor teaching the self-determination course. She has a bachelor's degree from Purdue University and a master's degree in special education (mild to moderate disabilities) from Xavier University. She has been a licensed intervention specialist (K-12) since 2008. Terri is originally from Cincinnati and lives in Anderson Township with her husband and their three children, ages 13, 11, and 7. She enjoys watching her children play sports, cheering on her favorite teams (the Bearcats, Bengals and Reds), going to Kings Island, and vacationing with family and friends.

A very special thanks to former TAP Director, Jan Goings! We wish her all the best with her new endeavors.

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