

Neurodiversity Initiative Spring Semester Newsletter

January-June 2025



Here's what has happened in the last semester and what's to come!

Welcome! We are thrilled to share with you our progress towards creating positive Neuroinclusive environments on and off campus.

We express our gratitude to all of our Employer and Northeastern University connections that continue to support us and our mission.

Registration to our Northeast Regional Higher Education Neurodiversity Coalition Conference is now open **REGISTER BELOW**

<https://nehenc-conference.sites.northeastern.edu/>

In this
newsletter
you can expect:

Professional
Development
Series

Pfizer Visit +
Pathfinder Events

Communication
Badge
Collaborations

Spring Coalition
Conversation
Event

Initiative Updates

Professional Development Series - January-May

This semester we quadrupled! the number of Neurodiversity PD sessions with over 25 events across Northeastern and new employer partners, like Siemens, SAP LeanIX, & Pfizer. We had over 300 participants this spring. **If you would like to arrange for your company or department to have professional development done, feel free to email us at neurodiversityinitiative@northeastern.edu**

The Neurodiversity Professional Development presentations, led by Erik Brenner (Neurodiversity Initiative Director), Bridget Smyser (College of Engineering faculty), and Michael Lewis (Neurodiversity Initiative Student Coach), discuss what neurodiversity is, the importance of creating neuroinclusive settings and practices, neuroinclusive manager practices, and common misconceptions about the neurodivergent community.

Exciting Neurodiversity Professional Development at SAP LeanIX

A huge thank you to Jessica Wilson for inviting Cheyenne Mason and Erik Brenner to SAP Lean IV for an incredible professional development session with their global network! We had the opportunity to discuss taking a strength-based approach to neurodiversity in the workplace—an area we're incredibly passionate about.

It's inspiring to see how Northeastern University and SAP Lean IX are coming together to foster a neuro-affirming work environment, where every individual's unique strengths are valued and nurtured. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and appreciative. We look forward to our continued collaboration to make workplaces more inclusive and empowering for all.





PREF Professional Development Learning Series

We presented 2 professional development sessions to the Northeastern University PREF (Planning Real Estate & Facilities) Offices. In the first session in March, the presenters, Erik Brenner & Bridget Smyser, discussed an introduction to Neurodiversity and how to build neurodiverse inclusive spaces. In the May session, Erik & Bridget discussed the importance of neuro-inclusive manager practices. We are excited to continue working on creating neuroinclusive spaces. We had a total of 115 participants. A big Thank you to Beyazmin Jimenez for helping to coordinate these events and always being a supportive ally!

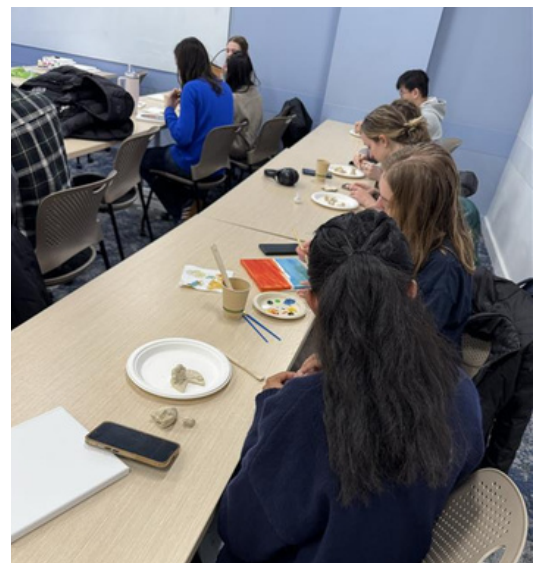
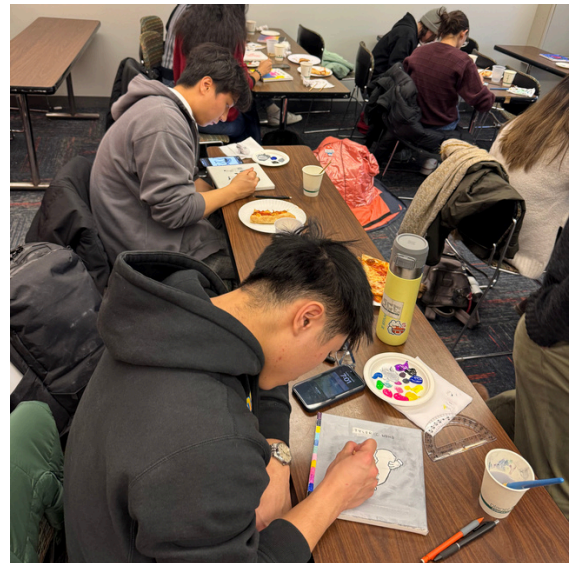
Pfizer Site Visit

We visited our co-op student, Ethan, at his lab in Pfizer and witnessed the impact he's making in such a dynamic environment. And, let's not forget those lab coats – looking sharp, Ethan! What stood out most was how Pfizer embraced universal design in the workplace. By adjusting their work environment to be more neuro-inclusive, they created a safe space for all employees. Inclusivity and innovation go hand in hand! A big shout out to Jennifer Quaglia (NU Alum!!!) for being such a gracious host and showing us around. Your warmth and hospitality made the visit even more memorable.

Ethan: "I am eternally grateful for their help and cannot endorse them enough. I strongly encourage anybody who struggles with any type of neurodivergence to get involved in this Initiative."

Pathfinder Social Events

We kicked off the semester by hosting our first Paint Night. We connected 10 students through collaborative art making, we introduced them to the Neurodiversity Initiative's student resources. We had a lot of fun socializing and creating works of art. Our March Art Night saw 16 attendees. Students shared what events they would like to see in the future, so we are planning ahead for the Fall. Thank you to all the students supporting our events and bringing along their friends



Communication Badge Collaborations



Green Thumbs Up
Actively seeking communication



Yellow Caution Sign
Limited communication, willing to communicate with people they recognize



Red Stop Sign
Prefers not to be approached unless indicated otherwise

Single Cell Proteomics Conference

A special thank you to the Single Cell Proteomics conference for having us! We connected with many conference participants and discussed the importance of making conferences more neuroinclusive.

Spring Coalition Conversation: Bridging Higher Education and the Workplace



AC Goldberg

On April 25th the Neurodiversity Initiative hosted the Spring Coalition Conversation Event, “Bridging Higher Education and the Workplace”. The speakers were AC Goldberg, a Clinical professor from Northeastern University, & Keshard Chery a Human Resource professional. The Webinar discussed the challenges neurodivergent individuals face within Higher Education and the transitioning into the workplace.



Keshard Chery

AC, your passion and informative tools on making many spaces more neuro-affirming was very informative, and many attendees took notes on making career fairs more inclusive. Keshard, your activity was received very well in the chat and was eye opening to the struggles of neurodiverse interviewing. Your tips on disclosing with employers was also great to hear. The Webinar had an attendance of over 70 people engaged on how they can make a difference. We would like to thank our speakers for a captivating discussion, your contributions were valued!

NEURODIVERSITY INITIATIVE UPDATES



The Second Annual Northeast Regional Higher Education Neurodiversity Coalition Conference will be hosted by University of Rhode Island this year, **August 29-30th**. One of our confirmed special speakers is Temple Grandin, a well-known Autism advocate.

REGISTER FOR OUR 2025 CONFERENCE HERE
[HTTPS://NEHENC-CONFERENCE.SITES.NORTHEASTERN.EDU/](https://nehenc-conference.sites.northeastern.edu/)



The Neurodiversity Initiative is currently offering Neurodiverse Student Group and individual sessions. The Initiative assists with social emotional development, Co-op support, and belonging on campus. If you feel as though your student could benefit or would like to connect with our student coaches, please reach out to our email **neurodiversityinitiative@northeastern.edu**

Thank you for reading!

THE NEURODIVERSITY INITIATIVE	<u>WEBSITE</u>
----------------------------------	--------------------------------