FEED Meeting:
The Federal Government and Neurodiversity
February 14, 2024

Featured Panelists

Scott Robertson, Ph.D.
Senior Policy Advisor
Employment-Related Support Policy Team
Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)

Dr. Scott Michael Robertson joined ODEP in 2015 and became a senior policy advisor in 2020. He serves as the federal project manager for ODEP’s $3.5 million Partnership on Inclusive Apprenticeship (PIA) initiative to drive career pathways in high-growth, high-demand fields such as information technology, data science, and health care. Dr. Robertson, an autistic adult, spearheads ODEP’s activities to enhance national autism policy and increase access to gainful employment for people on the autism spectrum. He also represents ODEP at the Federal Interagency Workgroup on Autism and advises on accessible workplace technology and emerging technology such as artificial intelligence, automated vehicles, and virtual and augmented reality. Therein, he collaborates on ODEP’s Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT). PEAT received a 2021 Zero Project Award for Innovative Policy in Employment by the Esso Foundation and a Service to the Citizen Award from Dorris Consulting International in 2020 as a result of Dr. Robertson and his colleagues’ collaboration. He earned his Ph.D. in information sciences and technology at Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Robertson completed his master’s degree in human-computer interaction at the School of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University and graduated Summa Cum Laude from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with his bachelor’s degree in computer science.
Teresa Thomas
Program Lead, Neurodiverse Talent Enablement
Cyber Engagement, Lead
The MITRE Corporation

Teresa Thomas is the MITRE Corporation’s (MITRE) Program Lead for Neurodiverse Talent Enablement (Neurodiversity@Work) and has a long history of advocating for neurodiverse populations. She has been a house parent in a group home for adults with high levels of support needs, is a parent of an adult on the autism spectrum, and is active in MITRE's inclusion and diversity programs.

Thomas brought together an advisory council consisting of private organizations, universities, self-advocates, and federal agencies to develop and pilot the Neurodiverse Federal Workforce program. She also designed, and now spearheads, MITRE's internal neurodiversity internship program. Both programs focus on providing opportunities and support for neurodistinct individuals in cybersecurity and other technical roles.

She is passionate about the topic and speaks widely about MITRE’s programs, and neurodiversity in general. Thomas is regularly interviewed as a subject matter expert and speaks often at federal agency events. She has been featured at the National Cyber Summit and the RSA Conference and on Bloomberg TV.
Dr. Lynn Cominsky is an award-winning professor in the Physics and Astronomy Department at Sonoma State University (SSU) where she has been on the faculty for more than 35 years. In 1999, she founded SSU’s EdEon Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Learning program. The program develops educational materials for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), National Science Foundation (NSF), and the U.S. Department of Education with a focus on students who are under-represented in STEM. Dr. Cominsky’s most recent project is NASA’s Neurodiversity Network (N3): Creating Inclusive Informal Learning Opportunities Across the Spectrum. N3’s goal is to provide a pathway to NASA participation and STEM employment for neurodiverse learners, with a focus on those on the autism spectrum. Dr. Cominsky is an author on more than 225 research papers in refereed journals, and the principal or co-investigator on more than $43 million of grants awarded to SSU. Among other prestigious awards and accolades throughout her career, the American Astronomical Society selected Dr. Cominsky as one of the first 200 Legacy Fellows in 2019. She also received the 2017 Frank J. Malina Education Medal from the International Astronautical Federation and the 2016 Education Prize from the American Astronomical Society. She earned her Ph.D. in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and graduated Magna Cum Laude from Brandeis University with a bachelor’s degree in physics.

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