

Neurodiversity workshops to be delivered at no cost to corporate America through UConn and Wells Fargo collaboration

\$3.75 million grant from Wells Fargo to provide employers with free neurodiversity education, training, academic research, and talent connections

STORRS, CT –Wells Fargo has partnered with the University of Connecticut’s Center for Neurodiversity & Employment Innovation to introduce free neurodiversity workshops for corporate America. The new workshops, an academic and corporate collaboration, aim to provide instruction to key leaders from Fortune 500 companies to help design neurodiversity initiatives end-to-end.

The full-day workshops are part of a larger \$3.75 million grant from Wells Fargo to create the Wells Fargo Center for Neurodiversity and Inclusive Employment at UConn. There are three components to the grant: 1) Providing neurodiversity education and training; 2) funding groundbreaking academic research study to capture much-needed metrics about the business outcomes of neurodiversity programs and to create standards for measuring success in this arena; and 3) working with universities, non-profits, and vocational rehab agencies nationwide to bring efficiency, programming, and education to their regions and better connect job seekers and inclusive employers within their local communities.

Neurodiversity refers to the natural variation in the ways people think, behave, and communicate. Neurodivergence is when that variation falls outside of what is typical, often creating barriers to success in finding and keeping meaningful employment. Neurodivergent conditions commonly include autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, and other differences.

Only about half of autistic college graduates are fully employed compared to their peers, according to Stephen DeStefani, the Wells Fargo team’s program executive who has led the initiative to partner with UConn.

“Partnering with Wells Fargo’s team has been amazing,” says Judy Reilly, Executive Director of UConn’s Center for Neurodiversity and Employment Innovation. “Wells Fargo’s willingness to share their real-world industry expertise to create—and deliver at no cost—education for corporate America that’s grounded in academic and research excellence is unheard of in this field.”

“This partnership enables UConn to blend academic instructional design and research with real-world industry application and expertise to create solutions for corporate America,” Reilly says.

“The workshops further the Center’s mission to create inclusive workplaces by increasing employer awareness and understanding of the value of neurodivergent talent,” says Anne D’Alleva, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at UConn. “This is a great example of how UConn’s research provides novel approaches to solve real-world problems in Connecticut and nationwide.”

“Since we launched our Neurodiversity program in 2020, we’ve experienced first-hand the significant impact these highly skilled individuals can have on the nation’s largest organizations,” said Kristy Fercho, head of Diverse Segments, Representation and Inclusion at Wells Fargo. “With continued underemployment of neurodivergent talent, we understand our responsibility to work with our corporate partners to collectively educate and bring awareness to this extraordinarily valuable and untapped talent pool.”

Job seekers and organizations can learn more about the new workshops and programming at neurodiversity-employment.org or neurodiversity.employment@uconn.edu

About the University of Connecticut Center for Neurodiversity and Employment Innovation

UConn’s center was launched in January 2021 and works nationally to educate and train employers about neurodiversity as a competitive advantage and how to implement inclusive practices to attain that advantage. The center also helps connect neurodivergent candidates with companies that value and support their neurodiversity and drives critical academic research into the impact of neurodiversity on organizational outcomes.

The University of Connecticut (UConn) is a public, land grant research university system with its main campus in Storrs, Conn. Founded in 1881, UConn has more than 32,000 students and is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education.

About Wells Fargo

Wells Fargo & Company (NYSE: WFC) is a leading financial services company that has approximately \$1.9 trillion in assets. We provide a diversified set of banking, investment and mortgage products and services, as well as consumer and commercial finance, through our four reportable operating segments: Consumer Banking and Lending, Commercial Banking, Corporate and Investment Banking, and Wealth & Investment Management. Wells Fargo ranked No. 34 on Fortune’s 2024 rankings of America’s largest corporations. In the communities we serve, the company focuses its social impact on building a sustainable, inclusive future for all by supporting housing affordability, small business growth, financial health, and a low-carbon economy.

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