

FINDING BALANCE

14th Annual Disability Symposium

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

PLENARIES

Sian Beilock, Ph.D.

Dr. Beilock is a professor in the Department of Psychology at The University of Chicago. Her research program sits at the intersection of cognitive science and education. She explores the cognitive and neural substrates of skill learning as well as the mechanisms by which performance breaks down in high-stress or high-pressure situations. Dr. Beilock's research is funded by the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education (Institute of Education Sciences). Her most recent book is *Body Wise: How Our Bodies Know Our Minds*. She also wrote *Choke: What the Secrets of the Brain Reveal about Getting It Right When You Have To*. Her research interests include attention and executive control of complex cognitive and sensorimotor skills, skill acquisition and expertise, performance under pressure and stereotype threat, and embodied cognition.

Performing at Your Best Under Stress

For many students, the desire to perform their best in academics is strong. Consequences for poor performance, especially on exams, include poor evaluations by teachers and peers; lost scholarships; and relinquished educational opportunities. Yet despite the fact that students are often motivated to perform their best, the pressure-filled situations in which important tests occur can cause students to perform below their ability instead. Beilock explores what happens in the brain and body when less-than-optimal performance occurs when the pressure is high. She also discusses how current research in psychology and neuroscience can be used to improve learning and performance in school – especially for students who are habitually anxious about taking tests.

Dmitri Belser

Dmitri Belser served as President of the Ed Roberts Campus (ERC) from 2004 to 2012, and was responsible for fundraising, design, construction and commissioning of the 80,000 square foot building. He is Executive Director of the Center for Accessible Technology, one of the ERC partner agencies. In his free time, Dmitri and his partner restore endangered historic homes, an effort which often requires moving the houses to new locations. Dmitri is known as “The Blind Guy with the Power Tools”.

Building Independence from the Ground Up: Universal Design and the Ed Roberts Campus

The Ed Roberts Campus (ERC) is a universally designed, transit-oriented facility that houses disability advocacy agencies in Berkeley California. The seven partner agencies came together to create a building that encourages collaboration and far exceeds the mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This talk will focus on how the ERC came into being, and how the blend of architecture and design becomes a tool for social justice, particularly for people with disabilities. The ERC was built by non-profit agencies in one of the most expensive real estate markets in the country. Come, find out how Mr. Belser accomplished this remarkable feat and hear his inspirational story.