**Practical Scholarship: Optimising Beneficial Research Collaborations Between Autistic Scholars, Professional Services Staff and ‘Typical Academics’ in UK Universities.**

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**Abstract**

The focus of this chapter is addressing the marginalisation of many autistic academics, and others without formal academic employment contracts, in UK universities. I consider blocks to fair participation in academic employment and propose strategies to circumvent barriers. These include: challenging narrow ideas about who should engage in research, emphasising the usefulness of insider perspective and collaborations, and prioritising inclusive practice. I discuss various structures to facilitate engaging in practical, collaborative scholarship. These include: the Participatory Autism Research Collective (PARC), Journal of Inclusive Practice in Further and Higher Education (JIPFHE) and National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP).

**Key words**: ally, academic, activist, privilege, collaboration, autistic expertise, PS staff, universal design, students, research, usefulness.

**Practical Collaborative Scholarship**

My research, focussed on improving disability equality in post-compulsory education, coalesces around the idea that practical collaborative scholarship is the way forward. Insider perspective is key to this area of enquiry. Those tasked with delivering services designed to make higher education more inclusive have essential insights to share, alongside disabled staff and students. Collaboration between interested parties in different roles colours a vivid picture. Practical scholarship requires that all players are committed to ensuring that research outcomes are translated into recommendations for positive change. As someone who now passes as a ‘typical academic’ by virtue of my job title, I recognise my privilege. My own neurodivergence and atypical career trajectory, including many years managing professional services, inform my position.

In this chapter, focussing specifically on the contribution of autistic scholars and researchers based in Professional Services (PS) teams, I trouble structures and attitudes which make collaborative insider informed research difficult. I go on to propose possible solutions. Relevant definitions (including the term ‘academic’) are critically unpacked in the following section, which challenges the idea of a shared understanding of some key terms in common usage in academia.

**Status and Problematic Definitions: Ally, academic, ableism, activist, merit**

Easy as it is to adopt the rhetoric of allyship and activism, self-identifying as an ally/activist is somewhat presumptuous. My job description unambiguously says ‘academic’. An exclusionary undercurrent is created by definitions of ‘academic’ which disenfranchise scholars not firmly attached to university academic roles.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, 2019) definitions for the terms activist, ally and academic (in noun form) require some unpacking: An activist is defined as ‘*A person who campaigns to bring about social or political change’.* Ally refers to ‘*A state of formally co-operating with another’.* Academic is used to name ‘*A teacher or scholar in a university or other institution of higher education’*. The implication that ‘an academic’ must be formally associated with the HE establishment, presumably as a student, lecturer or researcher, is contentious. While acknowledging the high quality of much autistic scholarship, this paper raises concerns about the status of autistic researchers in relation to the academy. Assumptions about academic-professional services role divisions are also problematised for their potential to stifle collaborations because of the convention that only (narrowly defined) ‘academics’ engage in research.

Bourdieu (1986, 1998) uses the term ‘title of nobility’ in theorising Cultural and Social Capital. He asserts that benefits and privileges are bestowed upon individuals with certain titles in the form of status and associated opportunity (Bourdieu and Farage, 1994). Researchers have utilised Bourdieu’s ideas of Capital when considering aspects of student experience and education policy but have not turned the same spotlight towards the questions under discussion here. (Student-facing examples include Lareau and Weininger, 2013; Maton, 2005; and Robbins, 1993). Interest in addressing structural barriers to research collaborations may be limited by funding or by unhelpful perceived status differences between ‘academic’ and ‘academic related’ staff. ‘Professor’ is a high-status title linked with a particular set of expectations around research activity. My fancy title opens doors. Despite a certain degree of status associated with leadership roles, as head of a PS department I sometimes found myself having to bang assertively on those doors.

Status is defined in the *Cambridge English Dictionary* (Cambridge, 2019a) as *‘an accepted or official position, especially in a social group: the amount of respect, admiration, or importance given to a person’*. Status, power and privilege are first cousins. Lack of status can create obstacles which powerful privileged people can choose to demolish. In relation to autistic scholarship, a more pertinent indicator of status may be the quality and influence of scholarly works rather than the professional roles of their authors. Merit and meritocracy are useful concepts in relation to the idea of status. The *Cambridge English Dictionary* (Cambridge, 2019b) defines merit as: ‘*The quality of being good and deserving praise’*. ‘*A* ***meritocracy*** *is a society or social system in which people get* ***status*** *or rewards because of what they achieve, rather than because of their wealth or social* ***status’*** (Collins, 2019)*.* Divorcing considerations about the status of a piece of work from the job titles of the author, and concentrating on its academic merit, could partially address the disenfranchisement of scholars unlikely to be employed towards the top of the academic tree.

Academic freedoms enabling me to engage in research congruent with my values are associated with privileges, including my role and, to an extent, my age. At sixty, with most of my career behind me, CV building is not my main motivation so I can make choices about where I publish and with whom I collaborate. Usefulness potential underpins these decisions.

Privilege is multi-faceted and I recognise that the burden of debt associated with higher education is also something which did not concern my generation (Murphy et al, 2019). A disparity in access to employer-funded higher degree study between lecturers and PS staff has been reported via The National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP) JISCmail list, illustrating further the relative advantage of academic titles and established roles.

In the UK, HE compares institutions using a range of measures, including the TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework)[[1]](#footnote-1). Student experience and the learning environment are key TEF indicators of quality, which include an equalities dimension relevant to neurodivergent learners. Disenfranchising PS staff from research designed to improve student experience, makes for an incomplete picture, even when student voice is included. Results of TEF inspections are in the public domain and a factor in student choice so could provide leverage in the argument for collaborative research.

In Foucauldian terms, an approach which impacts negatively on those without perceived status and the accompanying associated power and privilege would be categorised as ‘othering’ (Foucault 1980, 1982). Othering is a pejorative term which detrimentally constructs ‘them’ (autistic people and PS colleagues in this case), in relation to ‘us’ (academic university staff who are expected to carry out research). Sometimes the ‘we’ and ‘they’ binary gets muddled up. The existence of autistic lecturers and researchers and disability advisors with doctorates and publications may surprise anyone who did not realise that the academic club was open to diversity.

Obstacles that autistic people, however well qualified, encounter in accessing and sustaining paid employment make the status of employee hard to attain and sustain. Although comprehensive data is unavailable, evidence from The Participatory Autism Research Collective (PARC) indicates that autistic doctoral students rarely progress to research and lecturing contracts (Barnham and Martin, 2017; Gartsu and Stefani, 2019; Harmuth et al, 2018). If academic is defined in terms of a formalised relationship with the academy as either student or staff, those without such an association are effectively disenfranchised.

Grudgingly opening the door a little bit is not enough. Campbell (2009) and others use the term ‘ableism’ to denote attitudes and societal constructs that can impact adversely upon disabled people. Loja et al (2013) equate ableism with: ‘The invalidation of impaired bodies and the constant struggle to establish credibility’ (p193).Universal Design (UD) principles are built on the avoidance of ableist assumptions and the expectation that planning will take diversity into account. (Jorgenson et al, 2013; Milton et al, 2016). The Equality Act (2010) covers universities and is congruent with UD thinking. Alongside the TEF, the requirement of the Equality Act to listen to stakeholders as part of planning for diversity, reinforces the case for inclusive research. Expectations under the act include Equality Impact Assessment of policy, practices and procedures which are informed by those likely to be affected. Impact assessment is an avenue for insider perspective research.

Inclusive practice extends beyond increasing the diversity of the workforce and student body. Neurotypical privilege has been identified by neurodivergent researchers who point to the failure of the academy to engage in practices which accommodate a widening range of approaches and thinking styles (Bertilsdotter Rosqvist et al, 2019). Bashing square pegs into round holes because 'that is just the way we do things around here' is problematic and a waste of talent (Harmuth et al, 2018; Goldstein Hode, 2012). Collaborating with autistic and other neurodivergent researchers involves avoiding the ableist practice of expecting everyone just to fit in, put up and get on, rather than developing a supportive collegiate working environment which values everybody’s talents and creates conditions conducive to their best contribution (Gartsu and Stefani, 2019).

Autistic and neurodivergent employees in various contexts have discussed situations in which, in order to fit in, they have felt it necessary to mask characteristics which may be socially constructed as indicative of their otherness (Cage et al, 2018; Patton, 2019). Masking could take the form of pretending to understand and therefore not asking for help for fear of exposure. The general agreement is that masking can at best cause individuals unnecessary pressure and at worst can impact extremely negatively on wellbeing and mental health (Milton and Sims, 2016). Although my interest faces towards social justice concerns, some equitable employment practice research focusses on ‘the business case’ for working practices conducive to wellbeing (Martin, 2017). Logic dictates that employees who feel alienated and uncomfortable are less likely to perform effectively at work. A lot of energy goes into masking. In an inclusive workplace this would be unnecessary.

Carving out the contours of practical scholarship as a possible way of working as an ethical and reflexive academic involves engaging with contentious labels such as ally and activist. Scholarship feels like a less controversial term than activism when applied to work undertaken from my privileged position. Engaging in activism is altogether more risky for those without my salary safety net. Consequently I do not claim the title of activist, which arguably should not be open to self-nomination anyway. ‘Practical scholarship’ better describes my research which is designed for usefulness rather than shelf filling. Examples of approaches to practical scholarship are discussed in the next section.

**PARC as a Structure to Enhance Opportunities for Autistic Researchers**

Under the umbrella of the London South Bank University (LSBU) ‘Centre for Social Justice and Global Responsibility (CSJGS)’ I lead the ‘Critical Autism and Disability Studies (CADS)’ research group. Structurally PARC was originally part of CADS, which includes disabled and non-disabled academics and PS staff. CADS works on the principle of ‘nothing about us without us’ (Charlton,1998) and overtly leans towards the Social Model concerns of eradicating societal barriers in the name of social justice (Oliver, 2009).

My role alongside Dr Damian Milton in the development of the Participatory Autism Research Collective (PARC) <https://participatoryautismresearch.wordpress.com/about> is essentially supportive. Dr Milton and other autistic scholars were and are the main drivers. PARC started at LSBU in 2015 as a vehicle for autistic scholars to work together. The collective now operates in various locations across the UK and is extending its reach into Europe and America. Occasionally I find myself representing PARC informally when attending an event for another purpose, usually outside the UK. This is pragmatic rather than ideal as, although neurodivergent, I am not autistic. Study trips to America and Europe are further indicators of my privilege.

PARC has delivered annual Critical Autism Studies conferences at LSBU since 2017. The website provides conference details as well as examples of numerous seminars and researcher development activities. Autistic presenters are in the majority and contributions from neurotypical researchers are only included if selected by autistic PARC members. All events are free because many people wishing to participate do not have the backup of an employer willing to meet attendance expenses. Provision of facilities such as a quiet room is built into the planning to respect the requirements of attendees who may experience sensory overload (Milton et al, 2019).

Universities support PARC by hosting events without charging for rooms and the collective could not function effectively otherwise. The danger of over-promising and under-delivering is real when operating on a shoestring. Conferences are organised along good autism practice principles such as avoiding sensory overload, but occasionally overcrowding occurs and rooms get too hot. Because PARC is not paying for conference space, choice is limited, leading to logistical nightmares such as the quiet room being located on a different floor from the conference space.

Catering costs are a thorny practical issue. Autistic delegates find the idea of having to use university caterers illogical when they could easily create a ‘bring and share’ feast from the local supermarket. Various dietary requirements of participants could be easily catered for if individuals each contributed something suitable for their own needs. This would minimise the potential for anxiety about uncertainly which some autistic people experience around food. Sometimes, to save money, conferences build in longer breaks and supply lists of local eateries. For delegates not confident in unfamiliar surroundings this would be impractical.

LSBU opens up the events to students interested in autism and their evaluations evidence that PARC adds value to the curriculum. Similar arrangements apply in other universities. PARC was not conceived as a resource for non-autistic students and their participation has to be handled with care. In practice students are respectful and informed by social model principles and no difficulties have arisen.

Evidence of adverse impacts on self-esteem through perceived exclusion by peers reminds us that social aspects of college and university can be toxic, or (with a few tweaks) far more enabling (Chown et al, 2018; Hastwell et al, 2017; Milton and Sims, 2016). Autistic people trying to manage the alienating environment of their university or workplace frequently describe the feeling of ‘othering’ (Cliff, 1983; Foucault, 1982; Richards, 2008). One of the advantages of PARC is that it provides a safe space in which masking is not necessary. Ideally camouflaging in the workplace would always be unnecessary and the aim of much of my research is to provide a basis on which to move forward with this aspiration.

Members of PARC largely conform to an inclusive and meritocratic definition of academic, which acknowledges the scholarly nature of research often undertaken despite myriad ableist barriers, including lack of appropriate renumeration or effective reasonable adjustments in the workplace. Academic outputs from PARC members, in the form of refereed journal articles, books, chapters, conference presentations and so on, speak for themselves as evidence of impactful, high status scholarship. (Examples include: Arnold et al, 2018; Chown et al, 2015, 2017 and 2018; Lawson, 2015, 2017; Lawson and Lawson, 2017; Loomes, 2017; Milton et al, 2017, 2019; 2018; Ridout, 2017; Ridout et al, 2017; Woods and Waltz, 2019).

The list of references just quoted illustrates the productivity of PARC members, even though these examples represent a tiny fraction of the output. Unfortunately, eligibility rules for inclusion in Research Excellence Framework (REF) (<https://www.ref.ac.uk/>) submissions disenfranchise most of the authors just mentioned. Rather than being a quality issue, the problem is lack of employment contracts acceptable to the REF. Having work included in the REF is a university esteem indicator but clearly there are blocks in the road which have nothing to do with scholarly merit. Co-authoring enables profile raising for researchers not specifically named in REF submissions. An alternative interpretation is that co-authoring benefits disproportionately those already recognised by the academy.

Authenticity is an underpinning PARC value which involves striving to find ways of moving beyond tokenistic inclusion of people who communicate in ways which are not easily accommodated within the academy (Goodley and Moore, 2000; Milton et al, 2019). Indeed, communication of personal aspirations without voice was the theme of an excellent doctoral thesis by Brett (2016) which I have had the privilege to supervise recently, and which will be the topic of a forthcoming PARC seminar.

PARC, although a major contributor, is not the only outlet for research conducted by autistic people and the phenomenon is not recent. The ASPECT survey (Beardon and Edmonds, 2007), for example, was controlled by autistic people. Over two hundred ASPECT participants shared their perspectives about quality of life indicators. Resulting rich data covered themes such as housing, education, and criminal justice. ASPECT was unfunded and is a salutary lesson in how much more autistic researchers could do with a little financial backing.

**NADP: A vehicle for collaborative research.**

Practical scholarship characterises my twenty-year engagement as a Board member of the National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP) (https://nadp-uk.org). Originally NADP was set up as a professional association to help staff to work effectively with disabled students (Wilson and Martin, 2017). With over 1500 members, mainly from PS roles but including UK and international academics, NADP has become the go-to network for those committed to disability equality in post-compulsory education. Although research teams which include PS staff as well as academics are still a rarity (Chown et al, 2018), NADP acts as a catalyst for such collaborations. My position enables me to progress this agenda. As with PARC, volunteers are the lifeblood of the organisation. NADP, unlike PARC, charges a membership fee. This funds administrative support which is a significant enabler not available to PARC at this stage.

 Professional development is central to NADP and particularly important for PS staff who often have limited access to other outlets. Activities include: training events, networking via JISCmail, and highly regarded international conferences in which the voices of disabled staff and students are heard. Inclusive practice is built into process as well as content for NADP events. Social model thinking underpins NADP and the practical scholarship which emanates from the membership coalesces around the idea of removing barriers experienced by disabled people in college and university. My personal contribution includes numerous conference presentations and training activities designed to build the research skills and confidence of PS colleagues.

Researching with diverse teams in which everyone brings their own ontological perspective to the party can prove challenging. Doing so enables a wider view than would be likely if a group of people all sat around the table agreeing with each other. While it is easy to paint a picture in which the challenge is the academy for not allowing PS staff to carry out research and failing to pay autistic researchers, in my experience the reality is somewhat more nuanced. Listening and talking to each other with open minds across disciplines and role divides can open the door to new understandings. Discussing potentially contradictory assumptions as well as areas of common ground is an important aspect of working collaboratively. Understanding the context of the shifting landscape of UK higher education, in which a decade of equalities legislation has influenced the development of inclusive practice (May and Bridger, 2010; Draffan et al, 2017; Wilson and Martin, 2017), is essential in order to implement and evaluate change effectively. My ally allegiances face in various directions and coalesce around the idea of encouraging collaboration.

Academics in Critical Disability Studies tend to frame discussions around the Social Model and PS staff talk the language of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Draffan et al, 2017). Both groups appear to be positioned in the eradicating barriers camp but the marriage is not without tensions. Some disability practitioners may argue that they have to work within a system requiring a diagnostic label to support disabled students effectively, whilst others challenge the orthodoxy of disabled naming as a gateway to services and therefore a necessary evil within HE (Martin, 2008). PARC members are out and proud about their autism, but some autistic people are not as comfortable with the label and consequently less willing to contribute to research. Their voices are therefore effectively silenced. Services for autistic students and staff who are not out and proud are potentially behind a wall if they are dependent on a paradoxically Medical Model diagnostic process, in a notionally inclusive context (Hastwell et al, 2013).

I am privileged to have been part of several effective research collaborations between academic and PS staff and students. These all operated without unhelpful undercurrents around academic status. At Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) in the early 2000s, I was on a permanent academic contract as a principal lecturer (PL) whilst heading services for disabled students. Unusually the team included hybrid staff who researched and lectured in Critical Disability Studies has well as supporting disabled students directly. We worked closely with academics in the SHU Autism Centre on insider-informed research, focussed on disability equality concerns within the academy. Autism Centre academics continue to contribute to staff development around good autism practice in higher education at SHU (Chown et al, 2018). The helpful structure at SHU is something I inherited from Clive Owen (former Head of SHU Student Services) and so claim no credit for the vision and strategy from which it was created. Collaborations which began at SHU have endured.

Professor Simon Baron-Cohen led a project designed to improve the university experience of autistic Cambridge students by asking them for their expert advice and using the information to underpin change (Hastwell et al, 2012, 2013 and 2017). Baron-Cohen sought funding for a researcher post, which he located within the Disability Resource Centre (DRC), and appointed a disability practitioner to the position. He was adamant that autistic students should also participate in the steering group but this proved to be easier said than done. The absence of a paid autistic researcher was a limitation of the Cambridge project (Hastwell et al, 2012, 2013 and 2017).

Collaborative research enables productive conversations which might otherwise not happen. Academics investigating how autistic people experience university need insights into factors beyond the classroom which PS providers and end users can offer. Autistic researchers can advise on methodology and ensure that the right questions are asked in the right way.

Vision and strategy are required in order to facilitate co-operative productive working, which overcomes barriers between roles. Structural splitting can stop disability practitioners from being researchers. Insider perspective may not be factored in adequately if it is not part of the research vision and strategy. Staff in PS roles sometimes disparagingly referred to as ‘non-academic’, autistic scholars and others need encouragement, support and an effective infrastructure in order to develop their confidence as researchers (Chown et al, 2015; Martin, 2016, 2017).

Maslow et al (1987) originally identified belonging as necessary for progress to self-actualization in the 1950s. Belonging is built into the foundations of universal design and social inclusion. Belonging implies community. Whilst student experience is more likely to be the focus of research, we must not forget that disabled staff are part of the community too and often face similar barriers (Martin, 2017a; Milton and Sims, 2016). PS staff who find themselves justifying their own legitimacy as players within the research arena can also find themselves feeling disenfranchised within their workplace (Martin, 2017a; Milton, 2017). An important part of my contribution is around community building.

Ultimately, for research to be of any practical use, those in a position to enact change need to find it, hence the birth of JIPFHE.

**JIPFHE: Making practical scholarship visible.**

The Journal of Inclusive Practice in Further and Higher Education (JIPFHE) is open access and peer reviewed and serves largely as a vehicle for ‘practitioner research’ (<https://nadp-uk.org/resources/publications/published-journals/>). It is the main outlet for much of the practical scholarship of NADP members and includes contributions from disabled students and other stakeholders. In my editorial role I am proactive about helping scholars to shape their contributions if necessary. The editorial guidelines emphasise the goal of usefulness, the requirement for accessibility, plain English and insider perspective. The publication includes multiple examples of unfunded research undertaken by staff without ‘researcher’ in their title and unlikely to feature in the REF.

JIPFHE has not been tempted to publish work by academics seeking to understand the causes of autism. In keeping with PARC participants and other social modelists, the editors have no interest in Medical Model perspectives around autism. Genetic origins are irrelevant to improving university and the notion of finding ‘a cure’ feels rather insulting to autistic colleagues and students. It would be difficult to claim ally credentials alongside any sympathy with the idea of finding a way to eradicate autism in future generations. Exposure to PARC would allow those looking for a cure access to alternative perspectives.

While vanishingly few examples exist of scholars in critical disability/autism studies researching alongside PS colleagues, exceptions include: Chown and Beavan (2012); Draffan et al (2017); Hastwell et al (2013); Milton et al (2016). JIPFHE aims to bring disparate voices together, regardless of job titles and the status these convey. Universal Design is concerned with every aspect of university for every person, and JIPFHE shares the same ethos, so the editorial board welcome articles which look at the spaces beyond the classroom, such as Atkinson et al (2011) and Pritchard (2017).

**Practical Scholarship?**

Practical scholarship, which is informed by insider perspectives and conceived with the end goal of usefulness, can be helped along by structures such as those discussed here. While organisations like NADP and journals like JIPFHE can make small inroads into addressing silo working which creates barriers to collaborative research between academics and PS staff, their influence is limited. ‘Practitioner research’ is a term which is sometimes used disparagingly in academia. JIPFHE is essentially a vehicle for practitioner research which is hardly on the radar in relation to the REF. Although PARC is making great strides in terms of recognising and facilitating the academic contributions of autistic scholars, the ableist barriers discussed here are still all too common. Despite being proactive about improving conditions for autistic researchers, CADS cannot claim to be a truly emancipatory research group (French and Swain, 1997). To claim emancipatory credentials, disabled researchers would need to be employed as principal investigators in order to have a greater degree of control of the research agenda. ‘Researcher as Parasite’ is an expression which was coined by Stone and Priestley (1996, p.699). While autistic researchers often do not enjoy parity of esteem with many other academics because of the nature of their employment contracts, parasitism is a concern. My leadership role has given me the power to make policy decisions about only engaging with autism research that includes paid autistic researchers, and to cast the net beyond a narrow group of collaborators from the pool of critical disability studies colleagues. Current large-scale CADS autism research includes employed autistic researchers, as will future projects.

PS colleagues are increasingly engaging in work-related research and postgraduate study and I am well positioned to help, having worked in disabled student support myself. My academic role has enabled me to develop an MA in education/autism and Education Doctorate (EdD) in social justice and inclusive education. Autistic students add something to the mix. Inclusive practice is embedded into the delivery as well as the curriculum, and the majority of the readings on the MA are written by autistic scholars. The EdD is a practice-based doctorate and provokes other conversations, which interest me very little, about its status in relation to a PhD. Losing sleep about whether practitioner research is REFable, or whether an EdD is the academic equivalent of a PhD, is not something which troubles me at all. I am too busy thinking about whether my contribution is of any practical use.

In the spirit of usefulness I invented the acronym REAL which stands for: reliable, empathic, anticipatory and logical. The REAL idea appears regularly in my research with autistic students, but applies equally to academics who are not students. REAL underscores the idea that autistic people benefit from quite straightforward reasonable adjustments, which are also useful for everyone else (Martin, 2008).

**Conclusion**

Practical scholarship which places the question ‘so what?’ at the centre of the enquiry, has the potential to make a difference to people’s lives. This will only happen if the stage beyond ‘so what?’ is enacted so that recommendations are translated into an action and evaluation cycle which ultimately underpins sustainable change. Inclusion and insider perspectives need to inform practical research in order for a sufficiently rounded picture to emerge. Barriers and enablers within this endeavour are chewed over in this chapter. My feeling is that it ought to be easier than it is to make practical scholarship of the type discussed here relatively commonplace. Structures such as PARC and NADP have the potential to generate a critical mass and sense of solidarity between often marginalised scholars. Rather than being systemic pillars of the university landscape these networks have grown organically from grass roots activism and the contribution of volunteers merits recognition. Sustainability is inevitably an issue.

Autistic researchers need to be at the forefront of autism research and properly remunerated. I recognise my privilege in being in a position to do something about this, albeit on a small scale. Academics in critical disability studies, PS colleagues and autistic staff and students researching together provide a wider lens with which to consider ways to improve universities for autistic people. I am motivated to encourage and facilitate such collaborations. As someone who has the advantages and status of a salaried research leadership position, I am well placed to be able to do something useful in this regard.

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