

## FREE PCOM DIVERSITY CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON DISABILITY

The Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) Department of Psychology and the student group Culturally Aware Psychology Students will host their seventh annual Diversity Conference on **April 30**. Titled "Demystifying Disability: A Cross-Cultural Approach," the event aims to foster a deeper understanding of the unique strengths and challenges of the neurodiverse community—those living with neurological and developmental disorders.

Yuma Tomes, PhD, professor, psychology and conference director, says raising awareness of the issues often faced by these individuals can lead to a more inclusive environment for everyone. "Diversity is not just a socioeconomic or racial issue. There is another group within our society who has much to offer, yet is still being marginalized. By raising awareness of their issues, we can work to establish a sense of normalcy and ensure they can be productive members of our shared experience," Tomes says.

The keynote speaker will be Eric R. Mitchell, PhD, who will discuss the cultural identity development implications that can occur with a diagnosis of Autism, including some aspects of prejudice, discrimination, marginalization, solidarity, resilience and the responsibility of communities to empower change. Mitchell is director of autism and psychological services for Foundations Behavioral Health in Doylestown, PA, and is the author of "Putting It Together: The Autism and Asperger's Handbook."

The event will take place on PCOM's campus at 4170 City Ave., in the Ginsburg Auditorium of Evans Hall. The conference is free and opened to the public but advance registration is required. To view the full program and register, visit [www.pcom.edu/academics/academic-departments/psychology/diversity-in-psychology/diversity-conference/2016-diversity-conference.html](http://www.pcom.edu/academics/academic-departments/psychology/diversity-in-psychology/diversity-conference/2016-diversity-conference.html).