

2026 Academic Summit

Cultivating Resilience During Times of Change

JANUARY 15, 2026

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Mays Imad, Ph.D.

Connecticut College

Reimagining and Cultivating Resilience in the Academy



Dr. Mays Imad is an Associate Professor of Biology at Connecticut College whose scholarship bridges neuroscience, trauma-informed pedagogy, and institutional well-being. Trained as a neurobiologist, she earned her Ph.D. in Cellular and Clinical Neurobiology from Wayne State University School of Medicine, followed by an NIH-funded postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Arizona. Her national leadership includes service as a Senior Fellow with AAC&U's STEM initiative and as a Teaching & Learning

Fellow with the Gardner Institute.

Dr. Imad's research examines how stress, adversity, and structural inequities shape learning environments and academic communities. She investigates the neurobiological and relational mechanisms that influence self-regulation, motivation, and cognitive resilience, particularly within systems undergoing change.

In her keynote, "**Reimagining Resilience in the Academy**," Dr. Imad will explore how resilience emerges not from returning to a prior state but from co-creating conditions that support adaptive change. Drawing on current neuroscience and organizational research, she will highlight practices and structures that strengthen individual well-being, collective capacity, and institutional culture.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Summit Quiet Rooms available throughout the day and lunch
CRP LOUNGE FIRST FLOOR, ROOMS 308 & 318

8:15^A_M **Registration and Breakfast** – MEMORIAL UNION BALLROOM

9:00^A_M **Introductions and Welcome**

9:20^A_M **Academic Resilience:**
UPHOLDING CORE ACADEMIC PRINCIPLES – MEMORIAL UNION BALLROOM

10:00^A_M **Break**

10:30^A_M **Breakout Session 1:**
STORIES OF RESILIENCE: CARING FOR YOURSELF
WHILE CARING FOR OTHERS – MEMORIAL UNION BALLROOM

Breakout Session 2:
COMMUNITY RESILIENCE: NAVIGATING GRIEF AND LOSS
ON CAMPUS – ROOM 360

11:50^A_M **Break**

12:00^P_M **Lunch**– MEMORIAL UNION BALLROOM

12:40^P_M **Keynote:**
REIMAGINING AND CULTIVATING RESILIENCE
IN THE ACADEMY – MEMORIAL UNION BALLROOM

1:30^P_M **Break**

1:45^P_M **Breakout Session 1:**
RESILIENT LEARNING COMMUNITIES: A THREE-PHASE APPROACH TO
CURRICULUM DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND FOSTERING A CULTURE
OF CARE IN THE CLASSROOM – MEMORIAL UNION BALLROOM

Breakout Session 2:
RESEARCH RESILIENCE: RESEARCH, MENTORING, AND THE ACADEMIC
PIPELINE – ATRIUM I

3:15^P_M **Community Gathering Time, Q&A and Raffle**
MEMORIAL UNION BALLROOM

Please scan at the end of the day to complete the post evaluation survey.

