



July 18, 2024 • Tinley Park Convention Center

Preliminary Conference Agenda

- 8:00 am – Registration Check-In Opens** (South Entry)
 - 8:00 - 8:30 am – Continental Breakfast** (Exhibit South)
 - 8:30 - 10:15 am – Welcome & Morning Plenary Session** (Exhibit South)
 - 10:15 - 10:35 am – Break**
 - 10:35 - 11:25 am – Interest Sessions**
 - 11:25 - 11:40 am – Break**
 - 11:40 am - 12:30 pm – Interest Sessions**
 - 12:30 - 2:00 pm – Lunch & Program** (Exhibit South)
 - 2:00 - 2:10 pm – Break**
 - 2:10 - 3:00 pm – Interest Sessions**
 - 3:00 - 3:10 pm – Break**
 - 3:10 - 4:00 pm – Interest Sessions**
-

Interest Sessions

Round 1 – 10:35 - 11:25 am

- **Envisioning Educational Community Health** (South Pavilion 2)

Join us for an inspiring and interactive vision board session where we will collaboratively imagine a community that prioritizes education and health equity. Through this creative activity, participants will visualize and articulate what such a community looks like and capture these ideas on vision boards. This session will help us identify key phrases, values, and actionable steps towards achieving this vision in our own lives and communities. This vision board session aims to inspire and equip participants with tangible tools and ideas to advocate for and create more equitable and healthy communities.

Presenter: *Dada Ibrahimovic, Professional Development Specialist, Illinois Student Assistance Commission*

- **Understanding the Impact of Secondary Trauma in Mentoring** (South Pavilion 4)

Secondary trauma, also known as compassion fatigue, or vicarious trauma, occurs when an individual is exposed to the traumatic experiences of others, leading to emotional distress. This can affect mentors who work with individuals who have experienced trauma. Mentors may experience symptoms similar to post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of their work, and it is important for organizations to recognize and address the impact of secondary trauma on their staff.

Presenters: *Shykira Richards, Director of Program Administration, WOW, Youth Guidance; Ngozi Harris, Director of Program and Staff Development, WOW, Youth Guidance*

- **Creating Community for Black Scholars** (South Pavilion 5)

Through the development of the Black Scholars Educational Excellence Narrative (BSEEN), participants will learn about the impact and importance of creating a program that highlights the experiences of Black students, faculty, and staff in higher education, the city of Chicago, and the United States. This will be an interactive and conversation focused session on the challenges and celebrations faced in higher education when creating identity specific programming that positively impacts Black students.

Presenters: *Shelley Lemons, Assistant Dean-Student Engagement, Leadership, and Belonging, National Louis University; Keisha Rembert, Assistant Professor, National Louis University*

- **Addressing College Hunger** (South Pavilion 6)

Addressing food insecurity is a tool to support student health, improve student retention, and remove barriers to college completion, especially for first-generation and nontraditional students. This session will explore the issue of college hunger and share some of the strategies schools are using to help meet basic student needs, including campus pantries and connecting students to SNAP/Link benefits. Participants will learn about the SNAP eligibility rules for college students and resources that are available from food banks and other community partners to help support students.

Presenter: *Sara Medema, Manager of Policy Implementation, Greater Chicago Food Depository*

- **Dual Credit in Illinois: Mapping Increased Participation and Persistent Participation Gaps** (North Pavilion 1)

We will present findings from an Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative (IWERC) study on dual credit (DC) participation trends. The study found that while Illinois has progressed at expanding DC participation, these improvements have not been experienced evenly. All pre-existing participation gaps across demographic subgroups widened from the 2017-18 to the 2021-22 school year. We will show trends across school districts and community college districts and discuss implications for DC policy and practice.

Presenter: *Meg Bates, Director, Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative (IWERC)*

- **Students Are Going Where?! Changing College Enrollment Trends Might not Be as Dire as We Feared.** (North Pavilion 2)

This session will delve into the changing postsecondary enrollment trends and examine insights from several classes of high school graduates. This interactive session will also explore meaningful alternatives to traditional college pathways. Audience engagement will be encouraged, and attendees will share experiences and strategies to support high school graduate success. This session is for educators who want to learn more and help shape effective support systems for students navigating traditional and non-traditional postsecondary paths.

Presenters: *Shawn Bergman, Director of Research, Vela Institute; Jennifer Garrison, Superintendent, Vandalia Community Unit School District #203; Ana Moya, Professional Development Specialist, Illinois Student Assistance Commission*

- **Supporting Student Populations: Students in Foster Care, Unaccompanied Homeless Youth, and Undocumented Students** (North Pavilion 3)

Students in Foster Care, unaccompanied homeless youth, and undocumented students have higher education aspirations but face unique barriers when it comes to obtaining a postsecondary education. Join us to better understand the specific needs of these student populations and to learn about effective strategies and local resources available to help support students in their postsecondary planning journey. Attendees will also receive an update on Illinois DCFS scholarship programs & support services offered at Illinois 2-year & 4-year institutions.

Presenters: *Laura Gutierrez, Post-Secondary Education Specialist, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services; Manuel Talavera, Professional Development Specialist, Illinois Student Assistance Commission*

- **What We Need to Succeed: Students' Sense of Belonging on Campus** (North Pavilion 4)

This session will uplift findings from the Partnership for College Completion's recent student-driven report focused on students' sense of belonging within their campus communities. Drawing from qualitative interviews that students led themselves, this session will highlight student experiences finding and building community across their college journeys. The presentation will close with recommendations for policy and practice, reflections on the interview process, and an opportunity for questions.

Presenters: *Caitlin Power, Policy Analyst, Partnership for College Completion; Sonianne Lozada, Community Engagement Manager, Partnership for College Completion; Isabella Hernandez, Theatre and Performance Studies Student, Millikin University*

- **Future Ready: The Importance of College and Career Programming in Middle School** (North Pavilion 5)

This interactive session will provide participants with knowledge and resources to promote future readiness in middle school. Participants will learn why early adolescence is a crucial time for college and career exploration and consider how nurturing students' social and emotional skills alongside their academic and postsecondary pursuits can better prepare them for future success and overall well-being.

Presenter: *Kristen Nguyen, Manager of Curriculum and Professional Learning, Success Bound*

- **Unlocking Transfer Success: Navigating College Fit and Pathways** (North Pavilion 6)

This workshop will explore the critical importance of college fit in the transfer process, addressing the gap in student understanding of selecting a suitable institution. Drawing on insights from the recent "Tracking Transfer" data, the session will delve into Illinois' achievements and areas for growth, particularly in relation to students' transition into health professions. Join us to gain valuable insights into navigating the transfer journey and supporting underserved students in their education pursuits.

Presenters: *Dena Lawrence, Senior Project Coordinator, Illinois MyCreditsTransfer; Tyanna McCann Weaver, Director, Transfer Center, Olive-Harvey College*

<p>Round 2 – 11:40 am - 12:30 pm</p>

- **Envisioning Educational Community Health** (South Pavilion 2)

Join us for an inspiring and interactive vision board session where we will collaboratively imagine a community that prioritizes education and health equity. Through this creative activity, participants will visualize and articulate what such a community looks like and capture these ideas on vision boards. This session will help us identify key phrases, values, and actionable steps towards achieving this vision in our own lives and communities. This vision board session aims to inspire and equip participants with tangible tools and ideas to advocate for and create more equitable and healthy communities.

Presenter: *Dada Ibrahimovic, Professional Development Specialist, Illinois Student Assistance Commission*

- **Resolving Conflicts with Compassion: Culturally Inclusive Interventions** (South Pavilion 4)

This session seeks to empower and educate attendees on ways in which community well-being is enhanced through culturally responsive behavior intervention and restorative practices. Attendees will be provided with strategies to ensure that that intervention practices are tailored to meet the needs of the communities served, in addition to ensuring the emotional and social safety of the youth that are served. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of the impact of behavior intervention practices for holistic community support.

Presenters: *Kasey Brown, Afterschool Resources and Support Specialist, ACT Now; Tyrone Taliaferro, Afterschool Resources and Support Specialist, ACT Now*

- **Supporting Dreamers' College Access Through Adult Education: The Case of the City Colleges of Chicago** (South Pavilion 5)

Chicago has historically been a welcoming city for immigrants. The City Colleges of Chicago provides a clear pathway for undocumented immigrant students to receive access to a free quality education via its Adult Education program. This session will address the steps taken to recruit, retain, and graduate immigrant students in partnership with the Chicago Public Schools, the local K-12 system, area CBOs, and the local foreign consulates.

Presenters: *Luis Alfredo Narvaez, Associate Vice Chancellor, City Colleges of Chicago; Luvia Moreno, Dean of Student Services, Harold Washington College*

- **Empowering College Students Through Mentorship and Peer-to-Peer Engagement** (South Pavilion 6)

In today's dynamic educational landscape, fostering a sense of community, building strong roots, and achieving academic success are critical for college students. This interest session explores the transformative power of mentorship and peer-to-peer engagement. These are not just buzzwords – these strategies are essential components of a thriving college experience. By fostering connections, sharing wisdom, and building a supportive community, students are empowered to flourish academically and personally. Presenters will share their approaches on programming, services, and activities that contribute to student success.

Presenters: *LT McIntosh, Program Manager, Foster Progress; Tom Kitzinger, Illinois Executive Director, America Needs You; Flynn Okner, Director of Corporate Partnerships and Volunteer Engagement, America Needs You*

- **What Students Want: Building More Holistic Supports for Postsecondary Success** (North Pavilion 1)

Centering on student voice, we'll explore To&Through Project's Student Stories highlighting the different ways students' school communities supported them along their educational careers. We'll draw from over 25 in-depth interviews with students of color, many of whom are first-generation and from low-income backgrounds, and share their direct recommendations on how practitioners can better support them not just as students, but as growing young adults. We'll examine the stories through the lens of A Developmental Framework: Foundations for Young Adult Success.

Presenter: *Yessica Guadalupe Vargas, Engagement Analyst, The To&Through Project*

- **Understanding and Supporting First Gen Students** (North Pavilion 2)

First generation students face a unique set of challenges that require additional support and services including parental support, mental health, and paying for college. Learn more about first generation students, who they are, and what they need and gain the information and tools necessary to support them through their pursuit of a postsecondary education.

Presenters: *Abel Montoya, Director of Outreach Operations, Illinois Student Assistance Commission; Sara Espinosa, Manager, Professional Development, Illinois Student Assistance Commission*

- **Building Bridges: Fostering Belonging for Marginalized Learners** (North Pavilion 3)

In today's diverse educational landscape, creating a culture of wellness is imperative, especially when serving learners from marginalized backgrounds. It is crucial for academic success, psychological well-being, and the overall school culture. This workshop aims to delve into the importance of fostering belonging, examine the school environment's impact, and empower educators to spearhead initiatives that cultivate a culture of inclusivity which will translate into academic success.

Presenter: *Matthew Adkins, Program Chair, iCan Dream Center*

- **Supporting Minority Serving Institutions – Illinois Roundtable** (North Pavilion 4)

Calling all Minority Serving Institutions! Join us to engage in a discussion about how to best support Illinois' Asian American Native American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Predominantly Black Serving Institutions (PBIs) through networking, public education, and resource sharing. We will also strategize future policy issues that need to be addressed across MSI designations.

Presenters: *Christina Warden, Director of Policy and Programs, Women Employed; Veronica Arreola, Director of Hispanic Serving Institution Initiatives, University of Illinois Chicago*

- **An Introduction to the Illinois PaCE Curriculum for 6th-8th Grade** (North Pavilion 5)

This session will introduce the newly developed Illinois PaCE curriculum for 6th-8th grade. Attendees will gain an understanding of how student engagement with the curriculum helps meet the PaCE framework benchmarks and hear some best practices for implementation to best serve students. The curriculum structure and content of specific lessons will be reviewed along with upcoming opportunities to gain access to the full curriculum by participating in a detailed training session led by ISAC staff.

Presenter: *Kimberly Korando, Assistant Director, College Access and Outreach, Illinois Student Assistance Commission*

- **Building Blocks for Equity... Literally** (North Pavilion 6)

In this interactive session, we will facilitate an activity using Lego building blocks to talk about concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion and how they apply to work in higher education through a constructivist lens. A constructivist approach suggests that learning is a continual process of meaning making; it is how individuals make sense of their experiences (Amineh & Asl, 2015). Participants will learn a method for engaging colleagues and students in meaningful conversation.

Presenters: *Nick Branson, Assistant Vice President, Strategic Advancement, College of Lake County; Luis Jauregui, Communication Specialist, Student Recruitment & Onboarding, College of Lake County; Cynthia Padilla, Director, Student Success Strategy, College of Lake County*

Round 3 – 2:10 - 3:00 pm

- **Envisioning Educational Community Health** (South Pavilion 2)

Join us for an inspiring and interactive vision board session where we will collaboratively imagine a community that prioritizes education and health equity. Through this creative activity, participants will visualize and articulate what such a community looks like and capture these ideas on vision boards. This session will help us identify key phrases, values, and actionable steps towards achieving this vision in our own lives and communities. This vision board session aims to inspire and equip participants with tangible tools and ideas to advocate for and create more equitable and healthy communities.

Presenter: *Dada Ibrahimovic, Professional Development Specialist, Illinois Student Assistance Commission*

- **Empowering Futures with the CS Starter Academy** (South Pavilion 4)

The CS Starter Academy is a suite of programs that support community college students interested in CS/tech designed to help mitigate the barriers they face when transferring to a 4-year university. Barriers to transfer affect historically excluded populations, which in turn contribute to the already minimal representation of Black, Latinx and female computer science four-year graduates. This session describes the CS Starter Program and details how the wrap-around supports can increase students' knowledge of CS, clarify the CS pathway to university, expose students to the Chicago tech community, and impact students' sense of belonging in CS. Attendees will leave with ideas to implement at their own institution.

Presenter: *Stephanie DeCicco, Associate Director, Community College Pathways, University of Illinois, Discovery Partners Institute*

- **One Million Degrees and Suburban Community Colleges: Driving Student Success by Embedding the OMD Wraparound Services Model** (South Pavilion 5)

In the heart of Prairie State College (PSC), Harper College, and South Suburban College (SSC), a transformative initiative is shaping the future of each institution's student support services. Through a partnership with One Million Degrees' (OMD) newly launched Advisory and Capacity Building team, each college is deep into the work of embedding OMD's evidence-based, proven support service model directly into its institution, using a tailored, localized approach to meet the individual student body and school's needs and priorities. The localized approach signifies a departure from traditional one-size-fits-all methodologies, embracing a community-driven strategy that recognizes the diverse needs of each institution, including each school's equity plan, and the students they serve. In this session, program leaders from OMD, PSC, SSC, and Harper College will share how they went about integrating their student practices, what they learned along the way, and what's next for the partnerships.

Presenters: *Josh Hoen, Chief Advancement Officer, One Million Degrees; Jessica Pap, Director, One Million Degrees, William Rainey Harper College; Bernard Little, Vice President, Student Affairs and Diversity, Prairie State College; Dr. Anissa Jones, Dean of Student Development, South Suburban College*

- **Building Pathways for Professional Development Opportunities for First-generation Students in College and Beyond** (South Pavilion 6)

At America Needs You we know the importance of building career pathways for first-generation students. As part of our Fellows Program, we must be able to provide them with diverse internship opportunities. It is also important to offer continued personalized support for the students after they graduate from the Program. Join our Illinois Executive Director and Director of Corporate Partnerships and Volunteer Engagement in a conversation about building relationships with corporations that provide internship opportunities. They will discuss creating a pipeline and engagement and stewardship best practices. They will also touch on offering career support to the program alumni that features a robust accountability framework with scheduled check-ins, enrichment opportunities and workshops.

Presenters: *Tom Kitzinger, Illinois Executive Director, America Needs You; Flynn Okner, Director of Corporate Partnerships and Volunteer Engagement, America Needs You*

- **Reducing the Disproportionate Representation of African American Children in Foster Care Advisory Commission – Higher Education Recommendations Presented to Governor JB Pritzker** (North Pavilion 1)

This session will provide a brief overview of the advisory commission's task, with a focus on the specific higher education, CTE, and related recommendations. The commission

examined contributing variables as a whole, for both families of and children in foster care. The recommendations the committee submitted to the governor's office address benefits to African American families at risk of becoming involved with the foster care system in the area of CTE training, as well as benefits to African American children who are in the system and are close to aging out. Educational recommendations tie closely with other variables that contribute to a family's involvement or potential involvement with the foster care system.

Presenter: *Michelle Shaver, Assistant Director, Illinois Board of Higher Education*

- **Motorcycles, Helicopters, and Sports Cars: What 80's Action-adventure Television Taught Us About Technology, AI, and ChatGPT** (North Pavilion 2)

Humans' use of tools is nothing new, but the tools that artificial intelligence (AI) is creating are novel, powerful, and often misunderstood. These factors lead to an increased chance of people using AI-tools in the wrong way or for the wrong job, which can have harmful or disastrous consequences. This interactive session will dispel the mystique around AI and address some common misconceptions around AI-powered interactive platforms. Participants will learn how asking the right questions can help find the right balance between professional expertise, others' viewpoints, and AI-powered insights.

Presenter: *Shawn Bergman, Director of Research/Professor; Vela Institute/Appalachian State University*

- **Community College Baccalaureates: An Equitable Solution to Post-Secondary Degree Attainment** (North Pavilion 3)

This session will explore the transformative impact of community colleges offering baccalaureate degree programs and provide research on trends in the other 24 states. Presenters will discuss the equity and geographical barriers which prevent baccalaureate attainment and share data on specific career paths that would greatly enhance the workforce needs of those businesses in Illinois, thus contributing to the economic health of the communities where those businesses are located.

Presenters: *Jim Reed, Executive Director, Illinois Community College Trustees Association; Tim Harmon, President, Workforce Enterprise Services*

- **Illinois Equitable Higher Education Funding Formula Cost Factors and Accountability Framework** (North Pavilion 4)

As the Illinois Commission on Equitable Public University Funding has published its recommended funding approach, its important that stakeholders understand not just what the funding approach prescribes, but also the assumptions and costs built into the modeling of the funding approach. We intend to discuss how the Commission built its adequacy model at the heart of the funding approach.

Presenters: *Eyob Villa-Moges, Senior Policy Associate, Advance Illinois; Jen Kirmes, Director of Policy, Advance Illinois*

- **Career Development – You Don't Know Until You Know** (North Pavilion 5)

Students introduced to a variety of robust career information, including experiential learning and community engagement, can have meaningful career exploration journeys in middle and high school. Using the PaCE framework, powered by CIS360, to introduce occupational concepts followed by concrete activities that teach students about these data is needed more than ever. Attendees will learn how to use PaCE to leverage educational equity for all student populations.

Presenter: *Troy McMillan, Labor Market & Career Resources Outreach/Training Specialist, Illinois Department of Employment Security*

- **If You Think We're Just a Scholarship Program, You're Missing the Point: Hope Chicago's Approach to Promoting College Persistence and Beyond** (North Pavilion 6)

In 2022, Hope Chicago committed to enabling thousands of students and parents from Chicago's south and west sides to attend college debt-free. Recognizing that eliminating financial barriers was just the beginning, they have spent the past two years forging a coalition of postsecondary, workforce, and direct service partners to support Scholars and Parent Scholars. They've also made critical pivots to ensure holistic student support, future readiness, and career preparedness. Discover how Hope Chicago champions student and family success further.

Presenters: *Brandis Haugabrook, Outreach and Engagement Manager, Hope Chicago; Zach Jesse, Program Support Specialist, Hope Chicago; Joeysa Dobbins, Program Manager, Hope Chicago; Jasmine Chievous, Associate Director of Academic Enrichment Programs, Campus Contact, Loyola University Chicago, Hope Chicago*

<p>Round 4 – 3:10 - 4:00 pm</p>

- **Envisioning Educational Community Health** (South Pavilion 2)

Join us for an inspiring and interactive vision board session where we will collaboratively imagine a community that prioritizes education and health equity. Through this creative activity, participants will visualize and articulate what such a community looks like and capture these ideas on vision boards. This session will help us identify key phrases, values, and actionable steps towards achieving this vision in our own lives and communities. This vision board session aims to inspire and equip participants with tangible tools and ideas to advocate for and create more equitable and healthy communities.

Presenter: *Dada Ibrahimovic, Professional Development Specialist, Illinois Student Assistance Commission*

- **Becoming A Triple Threat: How One South Side Alternative High School Is Preparing Their Graduates to Be College-Ready, Work-Ready, and Entrepreneurship-Ready** (South Pavilion 4)

Community Youth Development Institute is an alternative high school that provides an opportunity for non-traditional students to earn a high school diploma. Contrary to stereotypes associated with alternative schools, CYDI has recently attracted a younger population who no longer view our school as a second chance, but a preferred choice. In this session, CYDI will share our post-secondary model that encompasses intentional social and emotional intervention and prepares every student for college, work, and entrepreneurship.

Presenter: *Dr. Lauren Meeks, Assistant Principal, Community Youth Development Institute*

- **Trends in Financial Aid Application Completion and What it Tells Us** (South Pavilion 5)

Ever wondered where we are as a state or even as a region on financial aid application completion? Curious to learn about what the data shows on who is completing the FAFSA/Alternative Application? This session will do a deep dive into data to analyze current trends in Illinois, discuss ISAC's Financial Aid Application Completion Initiative, and tools to support schools. We will end with a reflective discussion to help you consider potential next steps.

Presenters: *Elizabeth Groves, Professional Development Specialist, Illinois Student Assistance Commission; Thomas Semanic, Professional Development Specialist, Illinois Student Assistance Commission*

- **Invest in Biliteracy: The Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy and the Pathway to Bilingualism** (South Pavilion 6)

The Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy affirms the bilingualism of high school graduates and translates into course credit at public colleges and universities in Illinois. Learn how to identify candidates, establish a program, celebrate success, and how to encourage students to continue language study in higher education.

Presenters: *Karen Skinner, Principal Consultant, Illinois State Board of Education; Emily Mizera, Principal Consultant, Illinois State Board of Education*

- **Gentrification: Examining the Impact on Education** (North Pavilion 1)

Explore the impact of gentrification on education through an insightful student analysis. This presentation will uncover how changes can significantly affect students' educational opportunities and outcomes in gentrifying neighborhoods. This will be achieved by shedding light on the complex relationship between gentrification and impacts on critical issues such as school funding, student displacement, etc. We aim for this presentation to help the audience gain an appreciation for the challenges faced by students in gentrifying neighborhoods.

Presenter: *Maritza Ortega, Youth Apprenticeship, Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University*

- **Tailoring PaCE To Be the Right Fit** (North Pavilion 2)

Learn how to tailor the PaCE Framework to the unique needs of your students and community and how existing practices can seamlessly align with the PaCE principles. Witness firsthand how the PaCE Framework integrates with College and Career Pathways Endorsements, providing a comprehensive approach to student success and postsecondary readiness. Join us for a session that goes beyond theory, offering actionable takeaways for educators and administrators alike.

Presenters: *Jessica Sonntag, Superintendent, Hinckley-Big Rock CUSD #429; Ana Moya, Professional Development Specialist, Illinois Student Assistance Commission*

- **Illinois State University's PULSE: Helping Communities Develop Special Educators from Within** (North Pavilion 3)

At this session, participants will learn more about Illinois State University's PULSE (Paraprofessionals Unlocking Licensure in Special Education) program. This two-year online program is helping paraprofessionals across the state who are already working in special education settings earn a bachelor's degree and teaching license in special education without having to leave their positions. School districts that "grow their own" special educators are more likely to retain them long-term, which serves to benefit the health of the communities and children they serve.

Presenters: *Melissa Ramirez-Osorio, Academic Advisor, Illinois State University; Derrek Drenckpohl, Student Success and Enrollment Coordinator, Illinois State University*