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## Newsletter

### ICCHE 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

The ICCHE Annual Conference was held virtually on March 3, 2021. This year's conference theme was **"Navigating the New Normal, Resilience and Moving Forward"**.

The keynote address was delivered by Matt Schmit, Director of the Illinois Office of Broadband within the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity and Chair of the Illinois Broadband Advisory Council.

Attendees had an opportunity to engage in four breakout sessions scheduled throughout the day of the conference, plus a Lunch and Learn about **Ed2Go** hosted by Joy Jamerson.

The four breakout sessions covered a wide variety of topics including:

**The Preference-to-Oppression Slope/Stereotype or Generalization? Navigating Difference, Cultural Competency Training**, to assist in the understanding of bias, prejudice and discrimination.

**Experiences with HyFlex**—how HyFlex course modality became a trending topic due to the pandemic.

**Understanding "Stranded Credit" and Other Hurdles to Adult Re-entry**, which covered common barriers to adult re-entry students.

**Open-Access Resources to Promote Resiliency**, discussed ways to find quality resource materials to aid with the cost of required texts.

The conference concluded with the board elections of new ICCHE officers and awards presentation.

Many thanks to the planning and awards committee for organizing this virtual conference!

While we may be physically distanced, our desire to bring innovative ideas to education keeps us close.



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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Ruben Howard II, Ph.D.

Dear ICCHE Colleagues,

I am honored to serve as the 46th President of the Illinois Council for Continuing Higher Education (ICCHE) for 2021-2022. When we all left the 2020 Annual Conference at Eastern Illinois University, no one thought that our lives would be turned upside down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As I reflect on this past year, the pandemic has dramatically changed higher education and our personal lives as well. In the face of these challenges, ICCHE has been resilient, and creative through staying connected with our members. Last month, we held our Annual Conference virtually. “Navigating the New Normal: Resilience and Moving Forward” was an appropriate theme for 2021 as we looked at ways to continue our mission in spite of the circumstances. Although held virtually, we were able to bring everyone together during this much needed time.

Our keynote speaker, Matt Schmit, discussed how important it is for our state to continue to invest in Broadband Infrastructure and Digital Equity. Our workshop presenters discussed relevant topics including Preference-to-Oppression Stereotypes, Experiences with HyFlex, Stranded Credit, and Open Access Resources. Educational partner, Ed2Go, provided attendees with ways to expand course offerings through their online platform. During the conference, we also awarded the Innovative Initiative Award to Mary Ettling and Courtney Breckenridge from Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville for their amazing work on Alternative Digital Credentials.

In an effort to engage our members even more and provide discussions on relevant topics in continuing higher education, we successfully launched our “Coffee Chat” Quarterly Series. During our first Coffee Chat, panelists discussed how to “Survive and Thrive” as many of us were looking for ways to continue to support students, faculty, and staff during the pandemic. Our second Coffee Chat focused on “What Worked and What Didn’t” as many institutions experienced the ups and downs with transitioning to 100% online learning. Our next Coffee Chat on April 27th at 2pm will bring panelists together for a great discussion on “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Illinois Higher Education.” All Coffee Chat’s are free and held virtually. You can register for them on our website.

I know that this year was not what everyone expected but we will get through this. We are looking forward to what this year will bring and we need your help in making our organization thrive even more. If you are interested in serving on any of our committees, please contact [info@ICCHE.org](mailto:info@ICCHE.org).

I look forward to serving as your President and working with you during this year. Stay safe and take care.

Ruben Howard II, Ph.D.  
ICCHE President



## 2021 INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE AWARD

### ...and the award goes to...

The Illinois Council on Continuing Higher Education (ICCHE) recognizes innovative initiatives, both credit and non-credit, which relate directly to and advance the purpose and mission of ICCHE. Each year the ICCHE Innovative Initiative Award is given at the annual conference. This year's winners were Mary Ettling, Director of Online and Education Outreach and Courtney Breckenridge, Specialist of Alternative Credentials and Grant Development from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) for their "Alternative Digital Credential Project".

The Office of Online and Education Outreach has been working in the Digital Badge space as a place where they can help both traditional students and non-credit students identify and articulate demonstrated competencies to be competitive in the job market.

This project involved three significant, targeted stakeholders.

- Employers who need short term training programs to prepare workers to be effective on day one in the job;
- State and County workforce boards who support funding and create a bridge between employers and the university; and
- A willing academic unit that aligns with those identified jobs.

"Digital badges and related alternative or microcredentials demonstrate great promise as a strategy for closing the skills gap, and supporting the alignment of industry skills with innovative curricular offerings and applied, hands-on learning," said Mary Ettling, SIUE Director of Online and Education Outreach. "This project will serve those dislocated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with 100 trainees anticipated to complete the program in the next 18 months to two years. The training, which incorporates online learning, remote reality elements and competency based in-person learning, leads to industry aligned credentials in high demand jobs."

Congratulations Mary and Courtney!!

Pictured left: Mary Ettling  
Pictured right: Courtney Breckinridge



To learn more about the SIUE Alternative Digital Credentialing program, visit:  
<https://www.siu.edu/educational-outreach/faculty-resources/alternative-digital-credentialing-resources.shtml>

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## ICCHE SPOTLIGHT

### Dr. Anne B. Rapp



#### 1. How and when did you get involved with ICCHE?

I've been attending the conferences for years, so it's difficult to remember when I first started attending. I started working with the Board in the last two years. I've been research scholarship chair, though the pandemic and funding issues have meant that we have not been as active in this area as in the past. I'm hopeful we will be in a good place to continue as things get back to normal.

#### 2. What do you think is the best thing for continuing education to have come from the crazy year 2020 that will continue into future years?

Traditional faculty finally understand that it is challenging to teach online, and they believe that it is possible to have quality teaching and learning in the online environment. Enrollment challenges due to the pandemic and the demographic cliff have meant that universities are looking to continuing education units and professional graduate programs to fill the gap. I'm hopeful that this will mean an openness and enthusiasm for innovation. Above all, the pandemic has taught higher education that we can be innovative and responsive. We can move more quickly than we thought we could.

#### 3. Tell us a bit about your work as Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of School of Graduate, Professional and Continuing Education at Lewis University.

The primary focus of my work is serving our non-traditional undergraduate and graduate students. We offer accelerated degree completion programs on the undergraduate side, and our graduate programs predominantly serve working adults who are earning a master's degree to advance their careers. So, the student populations have overlapping needs. I work with academic advisors who guide and support students; facilitate the formulation and revision of academic policy so that academic programs can grow and change; and I work with a team of academic technologists and faculty champions who support our learning management system and online instruction. As with all other roles, I also take on duties when they are needed. I've had the opportunity to work with emergency academic planning during the pandemic, due to the pivotal role online learning has played in instructional continuity this year. I'm starting to get involved in building articulations agreements and other initiatives in the Provost's Office.

#### 4. What was the turning point in your career that brought you to where you are today?

My predecessor retired. I agreed to serve as interim dean. I don't know what happened after that, it's been more than 3 years. I never intended to be an administrator. I love teaching. I do plan to go back to the faculty. At first I said in 3 years, now I'm saying 5.

#### 5. What is your best advice for people looking to enter the field of higher education today?

Be ready to take opportunities when they are presented to you. There is a ton of opportunity to learn if you are open to it. And, be prepared to perform in a role that is multifaceted and defies previous boundaries and definitions. The old divisions of labor are breaking down.

#### 6. What book are you currently reading/listening to that you would recommend to others?

I'm teaching right now, so I am not reading for pleasure much or even about higher education at the moment, except for the Chronicle and Insider Higher Education. It's been wonderful to read about globalization and have weekly discussions with my students. It's reminding me why I loved teaching full time.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE STATE

## Northern Illinois University College of Education

- Laurie Elish-Piper, dean of the NIU College of Education, has launched [PLEDGE \(Partnering to Lead and Empower District-Grown Educators\)](#). Its several innovative and impactful programs acknowledges that school districts are struggling to address the scarcity of teachers and principals by creating a plentiful, well-prepared and diverse educational workforce at all levels. PLEDGE also champions the philosophy of preparing new teachers who will stay in – or return to – their home communities.
- Online graduate programs in the NIU College of Education are [celebrating their 10th consecutive year of high acclaim](#) from U.S. News & World Report: The College of Education is ranked 21, placing in the top 10% of the 296 institutions assessed with an overall score of 91 out of 100. It continues a streak that began in 2012, when NIU made the “honor roll” in the first year that U.S. News began collecting data on online graduate education programs.
- [Partners for years](#), the Illinois Association of School Business Officials and the NIU Department of Leadership, Educational Psychology and Foundations are currently recruiting for their 17th cohort of one of the few state-approved Chief Business School Official programs. IASBO contracts with NIU as a service-provider of the mostly online coursework, hosts annual meetings between its board of directors and NIU instructors to ensure the curriculum is current and relevant and pairs its members with students to serve as supervisors during their three-semester internships.
- College of Education alumni [Lisette Jacobson and Maurice McDavid](#) [launched the “Black, Brown & Bilingüe” podcast](#) in July 2020. Among the topics explored are cancel culture; hate and forgiveness; hip-hop education; interracial/interethnic marriage; immigration; leadership; and multilingualism. Guests have included James Cohen and Joseph Flynn from the NIU Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Abu Bakarr Bah from the NIU Department of Sociology. Jacobson and McDavid are principals in West Chicago Elementary School District 33.
- [Five of the finalists for the 2021 Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching and for Excellence in Leadership](#) claim the NIU College of Education in their pedigrees: NIU alumni Maddi Bodine, Anne McNamara and Virginia Valdez are among the 32 finalists who teach preschool through third grade, representing just 4.5% of the 708 nominations received from 67 counties in Illinois. Principals Melissa Onesto and Martín Da Costa, meanwhile, are two of the nine P-12 finalists selected from 121 nominations.
- Middle Level Teaching and Learning majors in the NIU Department of Curriculum and Instruction were assigned this spring to [develop ready-to-use, culturally responsive classroom lessons and resources](#) that enable young learners to consider Ferris State University’s “Hateful Things” traveling exhibition. Those projects span essential social justice topics, reinforce critical social emotional learning skills, identify relevant instructional resources and texts and demonstrate ways to scaffold content on racial segregation, Black history, Jim Crow laws and more.



**Northern Illinois University**  
*Your Future. Our Focus.*



## WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE STATE

### Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

#### **The Pivot from in person conference to virtual conferences Q & A With Cindy Cobetto**

While the global pandemic of COVID-19 has devastated many industries, they have also helped our society reimagine how we might continue to connect in a socially distanced manner. Cindy Cobetto, Coordinator for Continuing Education for Licensed Professions Conferences and Events, quickly adapted and found a way to meet the needs of conference facilitators and attendees. "Once COVID hit, I was notified to pack up my office, cancel all events and work remotely. I was worried about my clients and how I could service them."

With the help of SIUE ITS department and Cindy's coworkers she was able to present her clients with the opportunity to host their conferences virtually.

**"Transitioning to online was a bit unsettling, but after receiving positive evaluations and compliments from clients and attendees, I gained a new sense of pride knowing that I could still make an impact virtually and the attendees were still receiving quality knowledge and I appreciate all the support I received from ITS and support of SIUE."**

#### **How many events did you host virtually during the global pandemic?**

I was able to successfully host 6 virtual conferences including Suicide Prevention, Annual Hospice Conference, a two-day Social Work Conference, the annual Immigrants in our Midst Conference, and an Art Therapy Conference.

#### **What pros and cons are there when hosting virtual conferences?**

Hosting a virtual conference can be very cost effective since items such as rental space, food and beverages and additional audio-visual equipment are not needed. Having a virtual conference allows many of my groups to expand their audience with extended and unlimited registrations as well as reaching attendees who typically would not attend due to the inability to travel. In addition, we can use break out rooms that allow the participants to attend breakout sessions or smaller group activities.

We've found some attendees might not have access and experience with technology to attend the conference. Others face "Zoom Fatigue", so we have to find new ways to create community. Pet parades, scavenger hunts and virtual yoga are some of the ways that we've tried to break up the conference content and get the attendees to better know one another.

#### **What advice would you offer when hosting a virtual conference?**

Remember to be flexible, open minded and proactive. Schedule a virtual walk through and offer your speakers time to practice and test their presentations. Be sure to provide links compatible with computer and phone access, which will allow your attendees multiple viewing options.

#### **What is next for virtual conferences?**

Many of the conference sessions have been recorded and the content can be shared after the conference is over. We are exploring some "on demand" CEU offerings as we build up these resources.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE STATE

### SIUE Successful Communities Collaborative-Highland Partnership

Throughout the 2020-21 year, students and faculty have been engaged with community-led projects in the City of Highland via the SIUE Successful Communities Collaborative (SSCC). Three collaborative projects include watershed education and community-engagement activities and program development with Highland's new Senior Center and Holly's House of Hope (HHH).

The watershed project includes promoting the updated Silver Lake Watershed plan by developing materials highlighting the benefits of living near a wetland, as well as conservation and stewardship practices to protect water quality. Mass Communication students are designing educational materials such as kids' placemats, traveling information displays, and a permanent, outdoor message center highlighting key watershed benefits.

The second and third projects center on Highland's new Senior Center and Holly's House of Hope (HHH). HHH is a non-profit whose mission is to guide young adults with disabilities toward more purpose-filled lives through employment and community service.

Students are exploring programming opportunities distinct to the Senior Center and HHH, as well as areas of potential collaboration between the two entities. Student researchers are exploring volunteer and mentorship opportunities to connect community members with time and expertise who can share with individuals who could benefit from their mentorship and experience. The project is also exploring workforce and on-the-job training models for individuals with developmental disabilities in areas such as food preparation, landscaping, and maintenance.

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
**EDWARDSVILLE**



## COFFEE CHAT—APRIL 27TH

### Don't miss our upcoming Coffee Chat!



#### Did you know April is Celebrate Diversity Month?

Join us for ICCHE's third Coffee Chat where our panelists will discuss diversity, equity and inclusion in Illinois higher education.

**Tuesday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at 2:00PM**

<https://illinois.zoom.us/j/87307623095pwd=cG1KWcTlZlFOL0g1TVdCSmtYelFZZz09>

Our panelists will share current programs, discuss plans for increasing diversity and answer questions. We also look forward to hearing from you on this important topic! Included on the panel are:

Stephanie Bernoteit, Executive Deputy Director  
Illinois Board of Higher Education

Omowale Casselle, Director of Pritzker Tech Talent Labs  
Discovery Partners Institute

Eric Lugo, Director of External Relations for Talent Programs  
Discovery Partners Institute

This panel discussion will be moderated by Dena Lawrence, Illinois MyCreditsTransfer Coordinator.

Grab an afternoon coffee and take a break to re-energize around this important topic. **Mark your calendar now!**





## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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### Standing Committee Chairs

Follow the link below for the complete list of ICCHE Standing Committee Chair members.

<https://www.icche.org/about/standing-committee-chairs>

## COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/IDEAS?

Please let us know your thoughts about the ICCHE e-newsletter! Suggestions for changes? How can it be improved? What types of information would you like to see included? Please forward comments or questions about this e-newsletter, and/or information for future issues to Teri Karpman or Becky White at the address below.

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## ICCHE LISTSERV

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