

# 2024

## COUNCIL OF PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES Executive Director's Report



celebrating 37 years of multi-campus collaborations

# COPLAC HAPPENINGS JUNE - DECEMBER 2024

coplac's three values - build community    strengthen connections    demonstrate value



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BUILD COMMUNITY  
SUMMER SUMMIT @ ST MARY'S

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DEMONSTRATE VALUE & BUILD COMMUNITY  
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WELCOMES & ON YOUR RADAR



# 2024 SUMMER SUMMIT

***BUILD COMMUNITY***

**9-11 JUNE 2024 @ St. Mary's College of Maryland**

***"Democratizing Opportunity: The Power of the Public Liberal Arts"***

**COPLAC'S FIRST SUMMER SUMMIT WAS IN 1988. SUMMER SUMMIT 2024 WAS DESIGNED TO MAKE COPLAC'S PRESENCE KNOWN, HELP US AMPLIFY OUR COLLECTIVE VOICE, AND MOVE US BEYOND DEFENDING WHAT WE DO. WORKGROUP SESSIONS FOCUSED ON FOUR ISSUES WE ALL FACE AND ARE CRAFTING SHORT- AND LONG-TERM ACTIONS/DELIVERABLES.**

- **HOW DO WE SUPPORT ADVOCACY WHILE PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF THE INSTITUTION?**
- **HOW CAN THE POWER OF GENERATIVE AI BE HARNESSSED TO MEET STRATEGIC GOALS OR ENHANCE THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE?**
- **WHAT ARE THE WAYS WE CAN EFFECTIVELY FOSTER ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE RECRUITMENT, ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT OF A STUDENT BODY THAT REFLECTS OUR PUBLIC MISSION?**
- **HOW MIGHT WE (INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY) BUILD THE PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE BRAND AMONG COLLEGE ADMISSION AND TRANSFER COUNSELORS, COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER INFLUENCERS IN THE COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS?**

# NSF & NEH GRANTS

## DEMONSTRATE VALUE & BUILD COMMUNITY

Co-PIs from SUNY Geneseo, UVA Wise, UNC Asheville, and Georgia Gwinnett College have completed the analysis of assessment data from NSF ADVANCE PLAN

**You can view the Tutorial of Institutional Dashboards and Preliminary Survey Results here.** The tutorial shows you how to access the institutional scorecard for your campus, as well as Pre-Project and Post-Project Faculty and Administrator Survey Results and the Partnership Impacts on COPLAC Institutions Report

Highlights of the report show that COPLAC institutions are implementing policy change in:

- Student teaching evaluation reform (40% of responding institutions have or are currently working on policy changes)
- Policies to make invisible service more equitable (25% of responding institutions have or are currently working on policy changes and 45% plans to work on or are considering to work on policy change)
- Training for Department Chairs on equity issues (40% of responding institutions created new training)

Work from this NSF Grant will continue through 1) Affinity Group Meetings via Zoom (ongoing; facilitated by COPLAC), and 2) Access to Chairs Training Modules in addition to being part of the curriculum of the Beard Leadership circle for department chairs and deans.



In April 2024, Co-PIs from Eastern Connecticut State University, University of Illinois Springfield, Evergreen State College, Northern State University, and University of Mary Washington were awarded an NEH Grant to work with Generative AI and Liberal Arts Skills.

This grant works with faculty knowledge about generative AI; curriculum design that incorporates generative AI into assignments and assessment; and new pedagogies.

The Co-PIs held virtual, monthly office hours last summer to work with faculty on assignments, syllabi, and questions. They continue their work this autumn and spring with webinars.



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES



# **2024 SUMMER INSTITUTE WORLD LANGUAGES**

## ***BUILDING COMMUNITY***



Since 2005, COPLAC has brought together faculty each summer to discuss issues related to teaching and researching at a public liberal arts colleges. Rotating each year to focus on a humanities, social sciences, sciences, or professional program, the 2024 Summer Institute worked with world language programs.

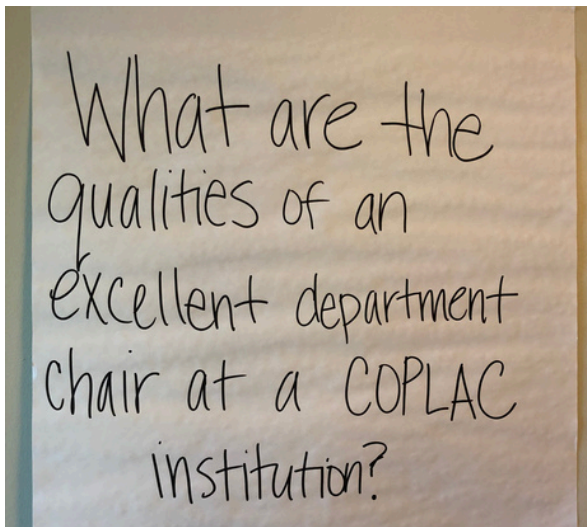
Faculty from Eastern Connecticut State University, Georgia College & State University, Midwestern State University, Mississippi University for Women, Ramapo College, Sonoma State University, University of Alberta - Augustana, University of Mary Washington, University of Minnesota Morris, University of North Carolina Asheville, University of South Carolina Aiken, and University of Virginia's College at Wise participated in the Institute -- sharing resources, developing short term projects together, and discussing issues their programs face.

The 2025 Summer Institute will focus on Health Studies programs.



# 2024 COHORT OF THE BEARD LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

## *BUILDING COMMUNITY*



Established to train administrators in issues specific to working at a public liberal arts college, the Beard Circle Leadership (BLC) began in 2020.

115 people have attended the BLC, including the 22 department chairs who formed the 2024 cohort. [You can see the BLC alumni from your institution on this roster.](#) Alumni consistently rate the BLC one of the most meaningful professional development experiences they have had.

The 2024 BLC planning group came from Sonoma State University, Northern State University, Truman State University, University of Montevallo, University of Mary Washington, and St. Mary's College of Maryland.

The 2024 BLC cohort met virtually in May and June. They gathered in person in California in July.

Deans and Associate Deans are invited to the 2025 BLC.



# NORTHEAST REGIONAL URSCA AND MIDWEST/WEST REGIONAL VIRTUAL URSCA BUILD COMMUNITY



## OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2024

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) hosted this year's Northeast Undergraduate Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity Conference. Students from MCLA, Commonwealth University, Eastern Connecticut State University, Ramapo, SUNY Geneseo, and Keene shared their mentored projects at the conference.

University of Minnesota Morris was the virtual host for this year's Midwest/West Undergraduate Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity Conference. Students from University of Minnesota Morris, Midwestern State University, University of Wisconsin Superior, and Sonoma State shared their mentored projects at the conference.

COPAC's three annual regional URSCAs (Northeast, Midwest/West, and Southeast) offer student scholars and artists an affordable forum where they can discuss with a general audience the significant work they have produced.



# OUR PRESENTATIONS AT 2025 AAC&U

## ***STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS & DEMONSTRATE VALUE***

**JANUARY 2025 -- IN 3 PRESENTATIONS, PARTICIPANTS FROM 9 COPLAC  
CAMPUSES WILL SHARE WHAT'S WORKING ON THEIR CAMPUSES AT THIS  
NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE**

***"CULTIVATING DEMOCRATIC CITIZENS: ADVANCING DEMOCRACY THROUGH THE PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS"***

**PHILLIP BRIDGMON (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA AIKEN)  
JORDAN COFER (UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MORRIS)  
KATIE GANTZ (ST MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND)  
COSTAS SPIROU (GEORGIA COLLEGE & STATE UNIVERSITY)**

***"PREPARING STUDENTS FOR CAREERS AND CIVIC LIFE: SUSTAINABILITY IN CURRICULUM, CAMPUS  
LIFE, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT"***

**PATRICIA SZCZYS (EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY)  
NITI PANDEY (EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY)  
JANET ERICKSEN (UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MORRIS)  
CLAUDIA LUKE (SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY)**

***"ADVANCING PUBLIC PURPOSE THROUGH SOCIETAL IMPACT – BUSINESS EDUCATION AT PUBLIC  
LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES"***

**TANYA GOETTE (GEORGIA COLLEGE & STATE UNIVERSITY)  
NITI PANDEY (EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY)  
RASHMI PRASAD (TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY)  
LYNNE RICHARDSON (UNIVERSITY OF MONTEVALLO)  
FILIZ TABAK (UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON)**



## Welcome Western Oregon University, our newest COPLAC member

### Welcome New CEOs

- Karim Ismaili / Eastern Connecticut State University
- Steve Schwartz / Interim / Fort Lewis College
- Emily Cutrer / Interim / Sonoma State University
- John Parkins / University of Alberta, Augustana Campus

### Welcome New CAOs

- Michelle Kiec / Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania
- Ben Pauley / Interim / Eastern Connecticut State University
- Noah Coburn / The Evergreen State College
- Holley Roberts / Acting / Georgia College & State University
- Kirsti Sandy / Keene State College
- Brandon Alakas / University of Alberta, Augustana Campus
- Brandon Schwab / University of Illinois Springfield
- Jordan Cofer / University of Minnesota Morris
- Yvonne Villanueva-Russell / University of North Carolina Asheville
- Philip Bridgmon / University of South Carolina Aiken
- Gary Johnson / University of Virginia's College at Wise



## Welcome New COPLAC Executive Director Jeanine Belcastro Went

Dr. Went brings extensive experience in higher education leadership, multi-campus collaboration, and strategic initiatives to COPLAC. As the founding director of the Higher Education Consortium of Central Massachusetts (HECCMA) for 11 years, she assembled 55 communities of practice, managed consortial programming, and oversaw cross-registration, bidding, and procurement processes. Dr. Went also built strong relationships with elected officials, forged key partnerships with city offices, the state emergency management association, and regional nonprofits, and secured grant funding to develop HECCMA's strategic plan. Her leadership enhanced collaboration and strengthened ties across HECCMA's 11 member institutions. Dr. Went starts at COPLAC in February.

### On Your Radars

- March 1, 2025 -- Deadline for Dunn & Prior Awards
- April 11 - 12, 2025 – Southeast Regional URSCA @ UVA Wise
- June 8 - 9, 2025 – Summer Summit @ SUNY Geneseo
- June 19 - 21, 2025 – Summer Institute: Health Sciences @ UNC Asheville
- July 28 - 31 2025 – Beard Leadership Circle: Deans / Assoc. Deans @ UNC Asheville
- Autumn 2025 – Northeast Regional URSCA
- Autumn 2025 – Midwest/West Regional Virtual URSCA
- January 21 - 23, 2026 – AAC&U @ Washington, D.C.
- Spring 2026 – Southeast Regional URSCA @ Mississippi University for Women
- June 2026 – Summer Summit @ UVA Wise
- June 2027 – Summer Summit @ Mississippi University for Women