

SPRING 2024

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COUNCIL OF PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES
Executive Director's Report



COPLAC HAPPENINGS JANUARY - MAY 2024



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COPLAC PRESENTS AT AAC&U

STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS

JANUARY 2024 -- IN 4 PRESENTATIONS, PARTICIPANTS FROM 11 COPLAC CAMPUSES SHARED WHAT'S WORKING ON THEIR CAMPUSES AT THIS NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

PRESERVING INCLUSION WORK IN POLARIZED ENVIRONMENTS: A CASE-STUDY APPROACH

MARCY BROWN MARSDEN – MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY
 CAMMIE DEAN – MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY
 RICHARD GLEJZER – MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
 TUAJUANDA JORDAN – ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND
 KAREN MORANSKI – SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
 MELINDA TREADWELL – KEENE STATE COLLEGE

RETHINKING THE ROLE OF THE LIBERAL ARTS IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION: INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES AND BEST PRACTICES

ERIC FREEDMAN – TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY
 TIM O'DONNELL – UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON
 WILLIAM SALKA – EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
 COSTAS SPIROU – GEORGIA COLLEGE & STATE UNIVERSITY
 SCOTT TOLLISON – MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

THEY SAID "YES?": UNLOCKING FUNDING SUCCESS AND BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE PROGRAM

SCOTT JONES – INDIANA UNIVERSITY KOKOMO
 CAMMIE DEAN – MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY TEXAS
 CRYSTAL JONES – INDIANA UNIVERSITY KOKOMO

ADDRESSING WICKED PROBLEMS THROUGH ENGAGED LEARNING: EMBEDDING THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

NITI PANDEY – EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
 PATRICIA SZCZYS – EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
 SUKESHINI GRANDHI – EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
 JENNIFER BROWN – MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY-NORTHERN

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 are holding virtual, monthly office hours this summer to work with faculty on assignments, syllabi, and questions. They will continue their work this autumn and spring with webinars.



**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES**

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL URSCA BUILD COMMUNITY



APRIL 2024

The University of Montevallo hosted this year's Southeast Undergraduate Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity Conference, the first in-person URSCA for this region since 2019.

Eleven students from the University of Montevallo and Mississippi University for Women shared their mentored research projects at the conference.

COPLAC'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.

DUNN & PRIOR AWARDS

DEMONSTRATE VALUE

These two awards are part of the way we collect and share stories about student success in the public liberal arts.

Both awards are \$500.

The Dunn Award is for faculty who contribute significantly to student success on their campus.

The Prior Award is for a student's essay about how attending a public liberal arts college has been important to them.

[You can see current and past winners of these two prizes here on the COPLAC website.](#)



The 2024 Dunn Award was given to **Dr. Cynthia Alby** (Georgia College & State University). She studies pedagogy, sociology, neuroscience, and behavioral economics related to how we can help faculty and students flourish. She joined Georgia College & State University in 2001, where she is now Professor of Teacher Education. She recently published a book (Learning That Matters: a field guide to course design for transformative education) with three COPLAC colleagues that is being used in many professional learning communities,

This year the selection committee decided on two Prior Awards. One to **Selah Ryan (University of Alberta, Augustana Campus)**, and the other to **Nicole Snyder (Georgia College & State University)**. Nicole's photograph is on page 2

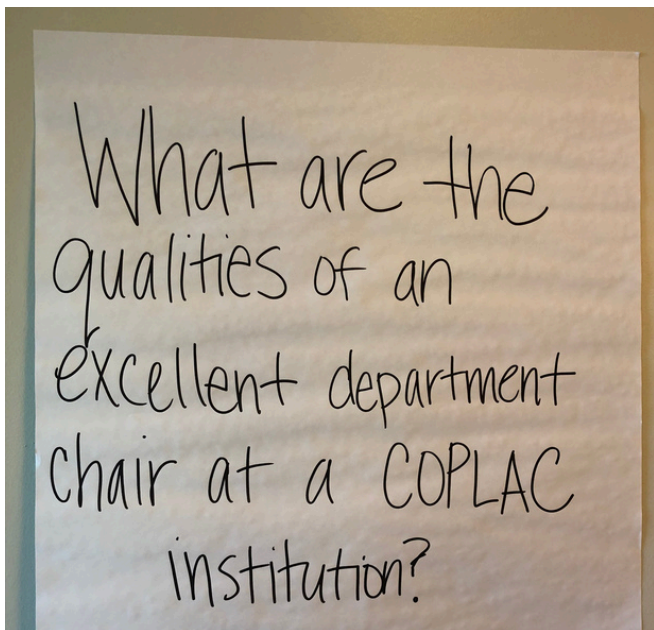


Selah Ryan is a senior Law, Crime and Justice student at the University of Alberta's Augustana Campus in Camrose, Alberta. She wrote her capstone thesis on the current academic discourse of homelessness, persons experiencing homelessness and crime in Canada and plans to begin work on a Master of Social Work degree after graduation. Originally from central Ontario, Selah has found her roots in Camrose where she plans to eventually find a community-building career. Read her essay [here](#).

Nicole Snyder is a senior Chemistry major, Dance minor at Georgia College & State University. Her research focuses on detection of nitroaromatic compounds using porphyrin doped silica sol-gels. She volunteers often with the Georgia Science Education Center in their STEMing in the Community program. She is also a dance instructor and teaches ages 4-65 years old. Future plans include pursuing a career as a college professor so she can help younger generations the way her professors did for her. Read her essay [here](#).



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

The 2024 BLC planning group comes 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 will gather in person in California in July.

Georgia State College & University will host the 2025 BLC



On Your Radars

- June 20 – 22, 2024 – Summer Institute: World Languages @ UNC Asheville
- July 23 - 26, 2024 – Beard Leadership Circle: Dept Chairs @ Sonoma State
- October 25-26, 2024 – Northeast Regional URSCA @ MCLA
- Autumn 2024 – Midwest/West Regional Virtual URSCA
- January 22 - 24, 2025 – AAC&U @ Washington, D.C.
- Spring 2025 – Southeast Regional URSCA @ UVA Wise
- June 8 - 10, 2025 – Summer Summit @ SUNY Geneseo
- June 19 - 21, 2025 – Summer Institute: Health Sciences @ UNC Asheville
- July 2025 – Beard Leadership Circle: Deans @ Georgia College
- 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