

New England



Educational Opportunity Association
www.neoaonline.org

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President's Message

Hello NEOA colleagues and friends. It is my honor to serve as the NEOA President this year and I am grateful and humbled to have this opportunity. I am grateful because as a TRIO alum I know first-hand the impact educational opportunity programs have on individuals; I know I would not be where I am today without the support of my Upward Bound, Talent Search & SSS mentors and experiences. As a TRIO professional I know the dedication, hard work and long hours that are put into the great work of educational opportunity programs, and I am humbled to help pay this impact forward as a TRIO professional and leader within my state and regional associations.

This year as NEOA President my goals are to:

1. Collaborate with state NEOA leaders and their associations to increase participation within each state and ultimately strengthen both the state associations and NEOA.
2. Encourage more collaboration between NEOA board committees to help increase engagement within membership, alumni, and retirees.
BTW: All NEOA paid members can serve on a committee. Join us!
3. Promote diversity, equity & inclusion within the work of NEOA and its institutional programs. I am excited that the DEI committee has been working over the summer to develop a plan and ideas of what NEOA can do to include DEI in our work, programs, and events.

I shared with MEOA at their conference this month that participating on the VEOP, NEOA, and COE boards has opened my eyes to truly understanding the importance of serving in some capacity when you are able. There are ebbs and flows all over the country when it comes to EOP involvement because as we each know, life happens. However, if the trend of stepping away from serving on our state or regional board continues, the great, impactful work that changes lives will eventually stop..

As Dr. Mitchem said to me, “Don’t be foolish with your impact.” We can ALL make a difference. So, I encourage each of you to challenge yourself or someone you mentor to lend a hand on a state or regional committee. It truly helps move the mission forward and it is some of the best, free professional development you may ever receive!

Some important information to share with you:

- New COE Book Club sign ups are open here.
- **November 8th** is National First-Generation Day. Please share with NEOA’s Public Relations chair, [Tony Staffiere](#) your photos and events so we can help promote them on our social media.
- **November 16-17** is the next NEOA Board Meeting in Tyngsborough, MA. All paid NEOA members are welcome to attend (virtual is an option) to learn more about what we do so perhaps you may want to get involved OR feel a bit more connected to it at our annual board meeting in **April**. [Here is a list](#) of other meetings.
- Please be thinking about and planning for Policy Seminar in **March**.
- Nominations for NEOA Achiever and NEOA Rising Star will be released in the near future-start making your list of nominees now!!

Lastly, I want to thank recent Past President Rob Pote for his leadership in guiding me into this role over the past year. He helped prepare me for this role and I am excited to carry the good work of his board forward. I wish you all a successful and healthy fall. I look forward to seeing you in some capacity in the coming year. Please reach out if you have any questions, concerns, suggestions or would like to learn more about joining a committee.

All my best,
Lindsay Carpenter
NEOA President, 2023-2024
Lindsay.carpenter@lyndoninstitute.org



Important Dates

November 9th – NHEOA Conference – Plymouth, NH

November 16 – 17th - NEOA Board Meeting – Tyngsborough, MA

December 1st - CAEOP Conference – Waterbury, CT

January 11-12th - NEOA Board Meeting – Springfield, MA

February 21-23rd - TRIO Day – Springfield, MA

April 9th - NEOA Board Meeting – Burlington, VT

April 10th – 12th - NEOA Annual Conference – Burlington, VT

June 6-7th - NEOA Board Meeting – Doubletree Nashua, NH

I'm First Celebration

November 8th has been selected as the date for the annual

National First-Generation College Celebration

to honor the anniversary of the signing of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Since 2017, institutions, corporations, non-profits, and k-12 schools from across the nation have celebrated first-generation college students, faculty, staff, and alumni on November 8th to highlight the important contributions made within their communities.

As we all know, navigating college as a first-gen student is a *HUGE* deal! So lets show the nation how our NEOA region celebrate the accomplishments of our First- gen TRIO students!

For celebration ideas, please visit [Center for First- Generation Student Success!](#)

E-mail your pictures from the celebration and student stories to Linda at shilcorm88@gmail.com for us to showcase our celebration in our next newsletter!



2023-2024 Board of Directors

Lindsay Carpenter
President

Rob Pote
Past President

Yara Zoccarato
President Elect

Julie Finnegan
Vice President
Annual Conference Chair

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NEOA Bylaws Chair

Miguel Peralta
TRIO Day Chair

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Professional Development Chair

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NEOA Achiever Chair

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Linda-Shiller-Cormany
Newsletter Co-Chair
Retirees Co-Chair

Kylee Casner
Newsletter Co-Chair

Gaelyn Hastings
Retirees Co-Chair

Please visit our [NEOA website](#) for Board of Directors' contacts

NEOA Membership

NEOA members, it's time to renew your membership!

Membership benefits include:

High quality professional development activities

Critical communications regarding regional and national issues that impact college access programs

Networking and support with colleagues throughout New England

Discounted rates on our fabulous annual conference

And more!! Tell a friend and renew today!

https://www.neoaonline.org/m_main.php



Reminder when renewing:

Professional membership is generally for self-pay – if you leave your institution, you take the membership with you.

Institutional membership is generally paid for by your employer, and if you leave in the membership year, your replacement will receive the membership.

Membership Cost: \$70/membership year (September 1st – August 31st)

A QUICK LESSON in Fair Share and Why it Matters...

The Council for Opportunity in Education (COE), based in Washington, DC, is the organization that advocates for TRIO and GEAR UP programs and works directly on Capitol Hill to lobby Congress on behalf of our programs and students. Without COE, bipartisan support for TRIO in Congress wouldn't exist. The amazing growth in TRIO funding we have enjoyed in recent years also would not be possible! COE also provides a plethora of services and support to the TRIO community with emphasis on **professional development and advocacy**.

Fair Share is the monetary donations COE receives from both individual contributions and institutional memberships. These donations help fund government relations and advocacy, professional development, research, and student leadership opportunities. The **FAIR SHARE PERSONAL CONTRIBUTIONS** are donations made by TRIO professionals, supporters and other college access professionals who usually belong to regional TRIO Associations. As a non-profit organization, COE is limited to what it can and can't use its funding for and Fair share contributions allow COE the flexibility to lobby and advocate on behalf of TRIO, as well as other college access programs.

Every little bit helps! Each year, NEOA has a Fair Share goal assigned by COE, and our region consistently finishes near the top in its annual giving! It's easy to get started by **visiting the COE website <https://coenet.org/>** to make sure NEOA finishes first in the nation again and COE has the support it needs to support our programs and students!



COUNCIL *for* **OPPORTUNITY** *in* **EDUCATION**

For Fair Share questions, please contact NEOA Past President, Rob Pote

NEOA Involvement

Professional Development Committee

The Professional Development committee is looking for new members and a co-chair! If you have an interest in helping to implement high quality professional development opportunities throughout the region, please contact **Lynn Ploof-Davis** at lynnp@maine.edu

Introducing the New DEI Committee

The **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee** is excited to promote DEI and empower our membership by shedding light on this crucial topic through “lunch and learn” sessions, and professional development opportunities. We look forward to engaging our membership in impactful dialogues which promote DEI educational opportunities and awareness. Committee Members include: Mona Savastano, Chasneika Astacio, Kevin Linton, and Marty Kingsley.

In the meantime, if you have questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Mona Savastano: Msavastano@salemstate.edu

NEOA 2024 Achievers

**Who will
you
nominate?**

Save the Date!

2024 NEOA Achiever Award Nominations

Help us recognize and celebrate successful
TRIO & GEAR UP Alumni throughout New
England's Educational Opportunity Programs!

**Applications Open
December 1st, 2023**



Questions? Contact:
Adam at adam.keese@keene.edu or
Becky at rebecca.carrasquillo@keene.edu



TRIO DAY 2024

TRIO

EXPLORE.
NETWORK.
FELLOWSHIP.
LEARN.

FEB
22ND-
23RD

LOCATION:

Sheraton Springfield
Monarch Place Hotel
Springfield, MA



NEOA at the COE Annual Conference 2023



News From NEOA's State Associations

Vermont

VEOP wrapped up a full 2022-2023 year with an in-person celebration after our virtual conference in March. After so many years of virtual events, our goal was to foster a chance for reconnection and rejuvenation, amongst membership, and enjoy time spent together. We gathered at Allis State Park in Randolph and enjoyed a morning of socializing and catching up, before a Taco Truck arrived for lunch. The last portion of the day was spent honoring our annual VEOP Award Winners and retirees.

Maine

Maine Educational Opportunity Association and the Finance Authority of Maine offered a free web training for TRIO professionals. On October 3 from 10:00am – 12:00pm via zoom about the new FAFSA for 2024. Mila Tappan, College Access and Outreach Manager presented.

Program Highlights

Central Maine CC SSS: Bootcamp time!

On August 8th, 2023, Central Maine Community College TRIO SSS was honored to cohost their Seventh Annual **Nursing Bootcamp** with the Nursing Department. Incoming nursing students rotated between three sessions, including a TRIO session that highlighted money, grit, and time management skills.

During the TRIO sessions, students received a budgeting worksheet, played financial literacy Bingo, learned about various income sources that may be available to them, and familiarized themselves with financial literacy tools such as FAME, iGrad, TRIO, and student financial services.

Students also learned what it means to have grit, how to improve their grit with a growth mindset, and to acquaint themselves with several time management techniques.

During lunch, our future nurses got their nursing questions answered from current nursing students. We are excited to host our next Nursing Bootcamp in January 2024!

Spotlight on Suffolk University McNair Scholars

The McNair Scholars Program has been funded at Suffolk University since 2008. We have entered our 4th awarded grant! At Suffolk University, the McNair Scholars program serves a maximum of 26 students at any given time. An integral component of the program is the Summer Research projects students are required to conduct during senior year. A stipend is issued upon successful completion of the research experiences. Program participants also receive personalized guidance in identifying and applying to graduate program. The program further tracks students' progress towards Recent accomplishments.

Shreesha Jamkatel has been selected to join the Student Advisory Board this upcoming academic year with the Pell Institute! This opportunity will help celebrate those within the TRIO community, and their experiences as we explore new ways to create a college environment that align with their post-secondary goals. Shreesha was selected to represent the entire state of Massachusetts and will be participating in this opportunity alongside the entire United States.

Our very own Dr. Stephanie Breen (a McNair Alumni and just recent doctor) has started a new position with the Pell Institute as the Research Associate of the Pell Institute for the Council for Opportunity in Education! We are so excited for both Dr. Breen and Shreesha.

News from VSAC



Keirsten White, Talent Search Counselor

- Keirsten White is the newest Talent Search Counselor in Windham County and Windsor County. Keirsten joins the team from her previous role as Interim Associate Dean of Students at the Putney School, and has experience as a film-maker and producer, as well as educator for film production.
- Jesse Cote is the newest GEAR UP Counselor in the NEK. Jesse joins the team with prior experience with Vermont Migrant Education as the NEK regional Coordinator, and with Emergency Services with NEK Human Services (during COVID) as well as Spectrum youth and family in Burlington. Jesse is also a returned Peace Corps volunteer where he served in Ecuador.
- VSAC's EOC team was recently awarded a new grant for \$50,000 through the Agency of Human Services (AHS) for Refugee Support Services (RSS), to allow EOC to provide support for education and training for 50 Afghan refugees.

Western Connecticut State University UB

On Friday September 15, **Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona** attended the **2023 New American Dream Foundation**, a family run charity that provides scholarships to students from immigrant families. Secretary Cardona was also presented the **Lifetime Achievement Award** for being a beacon of inspiration as the nation's first bilingual education secretary and for his ardent support for English learners.

Two students from Western Connecticut's State University's Pre-Collegiate & Access Programs were also presented with **2023 American Dream Award Scholarships**. **Elvia Fajardo**, a UB alumni pursuing a Nursing Major from Hartford University credits her parent's migration from Ecuador as her driving force to pursue her academics. **Julie Clara Ferreira**, a ConnCAP alumni attending the University of New Haven for a Forensic Science major prides herself in being the first in her family to graduate high school and to continue her zeal for education at the university level.

Thank Secretary Cardona for your work, and congratulations on the alumni for their scholarships!



This summer, Western Connecticut State University hosted its **2023 Summer Youth College fair** with 300 students and staff from CT's high schools and middle schools. This event was sponsored by the Pre-Collegiate and Access Department, which serves first- generation and/ or low-income students, and students with disabilities.

Students participated in various workshops with topics ranging from developing the college essay, college life, admissions, career exploration, college athletics, and financial aid. Students were also given a tour of the WCSU campus. Following workshops, students had the opportunity to meet admission representatives from eighteen college and universities from New England. The highlight of the event was providing an opportunity for students, enrolled in different educational opportunity programs, to learn and network with each other.



New England Student Leadership

Forty-five students from across New England represented the federal TRIO and GEAR UP Educational Opportunity programs at the **40th New England Student Leadership Conference** last month. The three day conference was held at the Hulbert Outdoor Center in Fairlee, VT on September 22- 24. The student leaders were chosen to represent their programs and participated in a ropes course, a leadership development workshop and the Eclipse challenge, an exercise in prioritizing the national budget. The emphasis of the weekend was personal goal setting and identifying and building the leadership skills needed to bring back to their schools and communities as they prepare for postsecondary education. Fifteen young professionals joined the conference and spoke about their path through higher education.

Rebecca Doucet, an alum of Lyndon's Upward Bound program who attended Lake Region High School was the Conference's Invited Speaker. Miss Doucet talked the obstacles that she faced with her transition to both Middlebury College and then onto Tufts University. She will be attending Medical School in the fall and really emphasized her own taking charge of her own path to high education and gave the students a descriptive explanation of how they too control their own destiny. It was an impactful weekend for the students who represented 5 of the New England States and 15 of the Federal Funded TRIO Programs; Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math and Science, and Educational Talent Search. (Rick Williams)



***GOT SOME GREAT NEWS TO SHARE? SEND IT ON FOR
THE NEXT NEWSLETTER!
Please shilcorm88@gmail.com***

New Director's Training

GEAR UP MA hosted a training for new directors, led by **NEOA Leadership facilitator Craig Werth**. Through reflection, discussion, song, and team building, our new directors were able to reflect upon their leadership styles, and how that impacts their teams.

This training was organized by **Taryn Tomkins, Director of Professional Development and Staff Support for GEAR UP MA**, who notes, "I wanted to create an opportunity for our new directors to create community and think about their own personal leadership styles. Under Craig's direction, this group of new directors feel forever bonded and ready to support one another as we all strive to provide top notch services to our GEAR UP students and their families"



Alumni Corner



Darrion Sprueill, an alumnus of the Upward Bound Program at Western Connecticut State University has been appointed to serve as a Washington D.C. TRIO Alumni Delegate with the National TRIO Alumni Association (NTAA). In this role, Darrion will help assure the NTAA continues to provide adequate resources and support to the TRIO alumni base.

Darrion completed his B.A. in Social Sciences from WCSU in 2017 and worked as the Upward Bound coordinator for John F. Kennedy High School in Waterbury, CT.

He is currently the senior project manager of the National Science Foundation (NSF) funded ADVANCE project at American University in Washington D.C. Since 2020 his work has centered around research and initiatives that support the professional growth of women and underrepresented minority faculty in STEM fields.

We at WCSU are proud of Darrion's trajectory and look forward to seeing him more at COE events as the Alumni Delegate!

Marie Machado

“I was introduced to Upward Bound as a freshman in high school. At that time, I recall two things, it was a “college preparatory program” and a way to temporarily escape the demands of physical labor, of working seven days a week. I didn’t envision myself going to college but I was outgoing and it was a remedy for isolation, an outlet to socialize and interact with people my own age. During the summer, I quickly adjusted to life on campus and loved every minute of it. The classes, work-study, eating in the cafeteria, evening activities with the students and counselors and living with a roommate.

Over the years I learned to take advantage of the opportunities Upward Bound provided, every cultural event, college tour, volunteer day and field trip. I looked forward to summers on campus as I knew I would see my friends, ones that I still am connected to today, but I would also get a jump start on the classes I would be taking in the fall.

I even applied for and was accepted to an exchange Bachelors of Science in Plant and Soil Science from the University of Vermont in 1999 and a Bachelors of Science in Nursing from UMASS Amherst in 2008. That summer challenged me beyond imagination as I was immersed in the city experience and I struggled to find my place. I finished the summer confident, academically advanced and ready to start my senior year of high school.

I was raised to work hard but Upward Bound gave me tools to set strategies to reach my goals, to think through decisions, and to weigh outcomes with potential benefits. I was successful with my first college degree because I had been given the gift of experiencing student life during the summers on campus. I proceeded to fulfill my dream of becoming a fourth-generation nurse by obtaining an accelerated second bachelor’s later in life because I had total confidence in myself. Without Upward Bound and the guidance it provided, I would not have gone to college and would not be a life-long learner. I would not have challenged myself to always consider how to contribute to my community in meaningful ways. I left nursing at bedside to expand my reach. I began to make system-level improvements to impact all levels of the organization. Then I began to train others to enhance their surroundings, ultimately striving to provide a safe patient experience.

I have two bachelor degrees and multiple professional certifications. I am currently studying to sit for the Certified Professional in Healthcare Risk Management (CPHRM) exam through the American Society of Healthcare Risk Managers (ASHRM). It is without a doubt that I would not have realized my goals without the support of the Upward Bound program and its mentors. Upward Bound prepared me to think through challenges and to meet them head on. To find a way when there seems to be none and to help others while doing it.” - Excerpt from Marie’s Impact Statement

Marie is currently the Patient Safety Risk Manager for St Charles Health System in Bend, OR. She received a





Myles Ouellete

“In 2004 I was injured, while serving in the United States Army Reserves. At 19 years old, I had no idea that being prescribed pain medication would take control of my life. I became a different person. I stole, lied, cheated and hurt the people in my life who loved me. In 2010 a year after my daughter was born, I went to prison for stealing prescription medication from my father. I spent 18 months in prison, got out with \$50.00 and a bus ticket and went right back to what I knew. I landed back in prison within the year. While in prison I had time to clean up and get perspective.

I was released from prison on October 27, 2015. With help from the Maine Educational Opportunity Center, I was enrolled at UMaine Augusta by January of 2016. During that time, I became a mentor for Restorative Justice, mentoring youth and first time offenders. I graduated from the University of Maine at Augusta with a Bachelor’s Degree in Applied Science, minoring in Addiction Studies. I was licensed as a Certified Alcohol and Drug Abuse counselor in August 2017. I started a case management program at the Knox County Jail, Helping Inmates Succeed. In this program, I helped inmates transition

into society. The same year, I raised \$150,000.00 to start a sober living house in Rockland, Maine. I also worked as a consultant for a child abuse prevention non-profit, co-facilitating a nurturing-fathers parenting class.

In 2018, I graduated from Husson University with an MBA in Healthcare Management. My next step is a Ph.D. in intervention and prevention or educational leadership. I have achieved all of these things due to the fact that MEOC asked me the question that nobody hadn’t before, “If you could do anything with your life, what would you do?” They were there to not only help me navigate the intricacies of attending college, but to help me find my life’s purpose. They empowered me to do better and to reach my full potential. I would not be alive if it were not for the dedicated staff of MEOC. I will forever be grateful. I currently work as a Clinical Supervisor for an Outpatient Behavioral Health Provider. When I can find the time, I also work per-diem for MEOC. My goal is to try and bring hope to students and people suffering from Substance Use Disorder. Folks need to know that they do not need to be a victim of circumstance. They have a purpose and I want to help them find it, just like MEOC helped me find mine.” - Excerpt from Myles’s Impact Statement

Myles is currently a Clinical Supervisor with Acadia Healthcare. He received a Masters Degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Healthcare Management from Husson University in 2018 and a Bachelors of Arts in Applied Sciences from University of Maine at Augusta in 2017.

“MEOC played a small part in Myles’s story, but he will share, MEOC offered support at a time when he needed it most. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to witness his personal growth, his confidence regained and his spirit healed. I am so proud of him and the mark that he is making on the recovery community in Maine. It is impossible to calculate the lives that he has touched or the families that he has impacted with his generous heart and giving spirit.” Statement from Teri Mann, Advisor for the Maine Educational Opportunity Center

The Jerry Ellis Professional Development Fund (JEPD) is Ready to Receive applications for the 2023-2024 academic year!

- **What's the purpose?**
 - To provide NEOA members with the opportunity to participate in a variety of trainings with preference given to professional development opportunities outside of TRIO/EOP trainings.
 - To encourage awardees to share their experiences for potential replication with colleagues and programs in the NEOA community.
- **Who is Eligible?**
 - Must be an NEOA member.
 - Has worked in a TRIO/EOP program for at least 6 months.
 - Must demonstrate need- why their program can't pay the cost.
- **What types of professional development opportunities are considered?**
 - The proposed training must relate to Educational Opportunity work, participants they serve, and the work an applicant currently performs or plans to perform in the near future.
 - The PD is offered by a legitimate/credible organization.
 - Types/topics that would be eligible:
 - **Direct Service:** Enhanced skills and knowledge serving the following: participants, parents, schools and partners
 - **Individual skill development** for professional/career goals: management and leadership, supervision, technology, grant writing, advocacy, etc.
 - **Program Development, Operations and Enhancement:** building/strengthening partners and stakeholders, PR, strategic planning, organizational structure and operations (record keeping, compliance, etc.).
 - AMLI or state/regional conference support IF their institution can't fund the cost. We suggest that this gets funded ONLY in **unusual** circumstances. These may include:
 - Frozen program funds by DOE or institution
 - Administrative specialists seeking technical training
 - Newly hired staff without program funds to support PD
- **How much will JEPD offer?**
 - Depending on how much the board allocates in a given year, we propose a range of \$500-\$1,500 per award.
- **What's the timeline/process?**

For now, the application process will follow the NEOA fiscal year, will have no deadline and will be awarded on a rolling basis depending on available funds.

 - We suggest that applicants apply at least **2 months** before they need the funds.
- **Are there Expectations if I receive the award?** Awardees are asked to report back to the NEOA board on their outcomes from attending the PD event and how they can share their learnings.

[Access Application Here](#)

The Current NEOA President and board invites you to:



GET ON BOARD WITH US! Join a committee. Learn about board positions. Come to a board meeting!

<https://www.neoaonline.org>