

New England



Educational Opportunity Association  
www.neoaonline.org

## SPRING NEWSLETTER

MAY 2024

### IN THIS ADDITION:



**FAREWELL FROM NEOA PRESIDENT <<<**

**2024-25 NEOA BOARD <<<**

**UPCOMING EVENTS <<<**

**NEOA UPDATES <<<**

**PAST EVENTS (TRIO DAY, POLICY  
SEMINAR, ANNUAL CONFERENCE) <<<**

**RECOGNIZING AWARDEES <<<**

**RETIREES AND ALUMNI  
SPOTLIGHTS <<<**



## FAREWELL FROM THE NEOA PRESIDENT



Hello NEOA Community,

It is hard to believe that my tenure as NEOA President is coming to an end. The feeling for me is very similar to when I exercise and have to hold a plank for 30 seconds-it seems to take forever, but once it's done it feels as though it was so short. As I reflect on the year, I am very proud of the work the board has accomplished and am hopeful for what is to come.

In my final newsletter address, I would like to share my thoughts of the year as NEOA President in the format of an activity I facilitate with students: rose, bud, thorn (the great, the hopeful, the not so great), not necessarily in that order.

**My rose as NEOA President:** Hiring Castro Collaborative to facilitate and work with the board in the realm of social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI). This was one of my goals and early on I and the board realized we could not dive into JEDI without outside experts and support. We have held two sessions with Castro Collaborative and while the conversations and work have been tough at times, it is happening. JEDI is making its way to the forefront of what we do as an organization and what we do within our programs and I'm so proud and thankful to the board for their commitment to JEDI as a board member, NEOA member, college access professional and human being.

**My thorn as NEOA President (because you can't end with the not so good):** It's A LOT of work!! While this isn't necessarily a bad thing, it does prove to be challenging to juggle a leadership role, a director role and a mommy/daughter/sister/friend/supervisor (list goes on) role. That all said, I learned a lot about myself as a leader (strengths and weaknesses), I witnessed the power of NEOA within the COE community and I have a better understanding of what it means to be the face of a regional association.

**[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]**

## FAREWELL FROM THE NEOA PRESIDENT

**My bud as NEOA President:** The board is moving in a positive direction. There are new professionals stepping up to take on leadership roles with the support of seasoned professionals to help guide them. New ideas are emerging, actions are being made to continuously improve the work we do to help support college access professionals and first-generation, low-income students and students with disabilities. I know this will continue with our incoming President, Yara Zoccatato.

**Gratitude:** I want to thank the NEOA board for their continued support and helping to make my year as President successful. I truly could not have done any of this without you. Thank you also to the NEOA membership and NEOA champions for supporting me. Lastly, I couldn't have done this without the support of my family and friends—particularly Brandon, Arlo, and Theo—thank you for cheering me on while I was away.

In closing, I would like to end with a quote from Brandi Carlise's book *Broken Horses*. It resonated with me especially as a TRIO alumna; "The upside of imposter syndrome is that you're always aware of how surreal these gifts are. I never expect it, so I'm actually incapable of taking it for granted."

With gratitude,  
*Lindsay*



## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEOA OFFICERS FOR 2024-25!

### **PRESIDENT:**

Yara Zoccarato

### **PRESIDENT-ELECT:**

Arielle Derival

### **PAST-PRESIDENT:**

Lindsay Carpenter

### **TREASURER:**

Matt Bourgault (re-elected)

### **SECRETARY:**

Julie Coon  
(re-elected)

### **VICE PRESIDENT:**

Heather Bacchiocchi  
(re-elected)

### **CT STATE LIASION:**

Fiorela Hidalgo

### **MA STATE LIASION:**

Naomi Brown-Jones

### **ME STATE LIASION:**

Ginny Ward  
(re-elected)

### **NH STATE LIASION:**

Melissa Goyait

### **RI STATE LIASION:**

*Open*

### **VT STATE LIASION:**

Michele Feiner



Election speeches being made. from left to right: Naomi Brown-Jones, Melissa Goyait, Michele Feiner, Matt Bourgault



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- >>> NEOA BOARD MEETING**  
June 6-7, 2024 - Doubletree by Hilton, Nashua NH  
All are welcome to join!
- >>> ARNOLD L. MITCHEM LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**  
Applications due June 7, 2024  
Read more below on page 9
- >>> SSS GRANT APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN!**  
Applications due July 15, 2024  
Good luck to those who are writing!
- >>> COE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
September 8-11, 2024  
New York, NY
- >>> NEOA BOARD MEETING**  
September 19-20, 2024 - Sheraton Monarch Place, Springfield, MA  
All are welcome to join!
- >>> MEOA CONFERENCE**  
October 2-3, 2024  
Hilton Garden Inn - Worcester, MA
- >>> 2025 NEOA CONFERENCE**  
April 9-11, 2025  
Crowne Plaza - Warwick, RI
- >>> NEOA BOARD MEETING**  
November 14-15, 2024 - Four Points by Sheraton - Newtown, MA  
All are welcome to join!

## NEOA UPDATES

### A MESSAGE FROM CHRIS LEE AND THE NORTHEAST TRIO GEAR STORE



Thank you NEOA for supporting the new store for all your custom gear! It was great seeing many of you at the conference last month. Now that you are staying cozy in your new branded sweatshirts, you might be wondering what else the Northeast TRIO Gear Store can do. First off, we are not just for TRIO programs. We support ALL

Educational Opportunity Programs, and even donate a portion of the proceeds back to the associations within the region. We offer more than t-shirts and sweatshirts. If there is something that you need for your program that you want a logo on, let us know. We will work to get you a quote. Review it before you commit to purchasing. Here are a few things that we have made in the past:

- Padfolios
- Journals
- Water bottles
- Vests
- Clips
- Backpacks
- Jackets
- Stickers



If you want to make a bulk order for your program, feel free to reach out to [chris@leestudios.com](mailto:chris@leestudios.com). We are looking forward to working with your program, state association, and even your institution for all of their custom printing needs.

Thank you for all you do for our students!



**Carly Kimball modeling a great hoodie!**

### MEMBERSHIP: UPDATES AND REMINDERS

Membership thanks our 282 members! Please pay your membership if it is still due. Feel Free to reach out to Jessica Coronel at [coronelj@wcsu.edu](mailto:coronelj@wcsu.edu) or Taryn Tomkins at [ttomkins@massedco.org](mailto:ttomkins@massedco.org) with any questions. And remember to renew SOON!

## NEOA UPDATES

### >>> FUN FACTS ABOUT THE HISTORY OF NEOA

The NEOA History Committee was re-instated this year. The purpose is to gather historical information, documents and pictures about TRIO and NEOA, to ensure that our rich history is not lost or forgotten. One hope is to store documents electronically, so they are accessible to membership. This committee has met several times this year and begun the process of gathering, updating and saving information. If you have historical pictures, newspaper articles, or documents please share them with the current Chair at [dmccann@unh.edu](mailto:dmccann@unh.edu) or the current President Elect at [zoccaratoy@wcsu.edu](mailto:zoccaratoy@wcsu.edu). If you are interested in joining the committee, contact [dmccann@unh.edu](mailto:dmccann@unh.edu).

Here are some fun historical facts:

- **1968** - The term TRiO was coined
- **1976** - the New England Association of Educational Opportunity Personnel (NEAEOPP) was founded. Marion Belgrave-Howard was President
- **1977** - The National Coordinating Council for Education Opportunity Associations (NCEOA) was formed. A national office to guide and bring together the regional associations. Arnold Mitchem served as Chairman. Marion Belgrave-Howard and Charlie Desmond served as New England participants.
- **1986** - The beginning of National TRIO Day. NEOA's first celebration was at UNH on February 28, 1986. Matt Lamstein was President. There were about 100 people. Craig Werth sang a song he wrote for the occasion called "Education". There was a marching permit from the town of Durham and all marched to the post office to put letters to congressional leaders in the mail.
- **1991** - The NEAEOPP (NEOA) conference was scheduled to be held at the Portsmouth Sheraton In New Hampshire in 1992, but New Hampshire did not recognize Martin Luther King Day as a holiday. The board made the decision to pull the conference out of NH and it was transferred to the Plymouth MA Sheraton, and with Monica Sargent as president, NEAEOPP voted not to hold any activities in NH until the legislature passed a holiday honoring Dr. King by name.

## NEOA UPDATES

### >>> NEWS FROM THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

You may have noticed or visited the innovative **PD “Booth”** at the annual NEOA conference. The goal was to solicit feedback about how the Professional Development Committee can support NEOA members. Thanks to Marti Kingsley who created and hosted the booth, we received plenty of input ranging from providing grant writing workshops online to creating an opportunity to advocate for continued DEI departments inside colleges and universities (DEI tracker). We thank all those who stopped by to visit and provided input!

**WAIT: Didn’t attend the conference and would still like to provide**

**input?** Attended, provided but have more input to share? Or, attended but you were too busy to stop by the booth? WE WELCOME YOUR INPUT ANYTIME! And....we need participation from ALL NEOA MEMBERS. The biggest challenge for the committee has been gathering input from TRIO & GEAR UP direct service professionals. **If you have any ideas regarding professional development, please share them with the committee.**

**Please email us: [lynnp@maine.edu](mailto:lynnp@maine.edu)**



**Re-creation of NEOA PD Booth!**

**More news....**

- We effectively promoted the Jerry Ellis Professional Development Fund (JEPD) allowing members access to valuable PD experiences. We awarded our first scholarships this winter to two candidates!
- We organized and offered the Pre-Conference workshop on SSS grant writing at the NEOA conference in April.

We need more members on the committee to help solicit input about your professional development interests, needs and opportunities. Your voice is important! We hope to create more opportunities to bring all our members’ voices to the table; thereby strengthening our advocacy. Interested in serving on the PD committee? Please reach out to Lynn Ploof-Davis. ([lynnp@maine.edu](mailto:lynnp@maine.edu))

We hope to hear from you soon!

With gratitude,

Lynn Ploof-Davis/Monique Coulson/Rick Williams/Mona Savastano/Marti Kingsley/Brian Post/Linda Shiller-Cormany



## NEOA ARNOLD MITCHEM LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE / DEI UPDATE

***“LEADING WITH HEART, MIND, AND SOUL”***

# AMLI 2024-25

**Applications accepted through June 7, 2024**

To learn more, email: [craigwerth.leadership@gmail.com](mailto:craigwerth.leadership@gmail.com)

*Details including the application packet may be found via the QR code or URL below.*



**AMLI Class of 2023**

**[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1E6pWGssOpIZrMvziTxtH\\_hK\\_bjxhT11q/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1E6pWGssOpIZrMvziTxtH_hK_bjxhT11q/view)**

## DEI UPDATE

The NEOA board participated in a JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion), training presented by Anastasi Morton, and Angelica Castro of Castro Collaborative. Board members eagerly collaborated as they enhanced their knowledge of JEDI topics during the NEOA conference in Vermont. Presenters from Castro Collaborative were also invited to enlighten NEOA members during the conference plenary session. The DEI committee chaired by Mona Savastano and Kevin Linton will continue to provide NEOA board members and membership with innovative opportunities to continue the DEI mission of the NEOA organization. Please keep an eye out for invitations for these upcoming discussions, guest speakers, and workshops.

If you have questions or suggestions about the NEOA DEI committee please feel free to contact Mona Savastano at [Msavastano@salemstate.edu](mailto:Msavastano@salemstate.edu)

## **CELEBRATING SUCCESS AT TRIO DAY!**

We're thrilled to share the highlights from NEOA's annual TRIO Day celebration! Held at the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel in Springfield, MA, we brought together over 400 TRIO and GEAR UP participants from more than 40 programs for two days of inspiration and empowerment.

On Thursday, the excitement kicked off with a warm welcome from Springfield mayor Domenic Sarno. Participants embarked on exciting college visits to renowned institutions across Connecticut and Massachusetts. The evening's festivities were nothing short of electrifying, with a captivating performance by Brass City Bomba, a dynamic Puerto Rican dance and drumming group.

Friday, February 23rd, was filled with even more energy and learning. Dr. Doug Luffbourough, III, "Dr. Luff," graced us with his inspiring keynote address. A series of engaging workshops delved into key topics, offering valuable knowledge and skills. The college fair was a bustling hub of possibilities, featuring representatives from 60 colleges eager to connect with our bright and ambitious participants.

This year's TRIO Day was not just a celebration; it was a testament to the power of education, mentorship, and community. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to making this event a resounding success. Here's to continued growth, learning, and empowerment for all our TRIO and GEAR UP participants!

-Miguel Peralta and Arielle Derival-Joseph, co-chairs, TRIO Day committee





## POLICY SEMINAR RECAP

In March, Policy Seminar Teams made up of TRIO and GEAR-UP professionals from each New England state, along with program alumni, joined colleagues and COE staff to engage in an intensive series of leadership trainings, educational forums, legislative updates, meetings with ED, and an array of proactive meetings on Capitol Hill with elected representatives and their staffers. Every year, when Staff and alum meet with their representatives, they request that a letter specifically articulating requests for continued funding and other TRIO/GEAR UP priorities be signed. The teams' strong advocacy efforts and testimony helped to advance legislative support for the programs and our shared mission. As evident from the Hill Day "report out", New England had significant success.



**NEOA 2023-24 and 2024-25 Presidents, standing with COE President Kim Jones and Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona**



**TRIO Alumni standing with COE President Kim Jones**



**2024-25 NEOA President Yara Zoccarato**



**Maine contingency, with NEOA board member Ginny Ward, in front of the U.S. Capitol Building**



**NH Senator Maggie Hassan with TRIO Alumni Marie (Kiki) Galpin and Stephanie Olivares**

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## POLICY SEMINAR RECAP

### THIS YEAR'S ASKS:

- The letters request that both the House and the Senate Appropriations Committees continue to prioritize funding for the Federal TRIO Programs in FY25
- The House [TRIO funding letter](#) closed with 199 Members signed on.
- The Senate [appropriations request letter](#) for FY25 is currently circulating.
- The Senate Appropriations Committee deadline for the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education requests closed on May 14.

Please make sure to reach out to your Senators to request that they sign on to the letter. The staffers for each Senator can be found [here](#).



**NEOA members and alumni at Policy Seminar**



**2024-25 NEOA President-Elect Arielle Derival with Wendy Porter-Coste and Lisbeth Martinez**

## FAFSA UPDATES

Federal Student Aid (FSA) has processed over 7.3 million FAFSA applications. Here are some key updates:

- Students who complete the online FAFSA should receive their FAFSA Submission Summary (FSS) right away.
- FAFSA corrections are now available for students. Students should be able to review their updated FSS within 3 days of submitting corrections
- A glitch that prevented parents without Social Security numbers from making accounts has now been addressed.
- The maximum Pell Grant award will remain at \$7395 for the 2024-25 school year.



## ANNUAL CONFERENCE UPDATES

### A NOTE FROM THE CONFERENCE CHAIRS:

Thank you NEOA for attending the conference in Burlington, Vermont! If you were not able to attend, we missed you and hope to see you next year. Every year we have the opportunity to get together with our colleagues and share ideas, techniques, and successes. I, for one, cannot be happier that we are back in person, able to spend time in each other's company, and have a reason to travel in our beautiful section of the country. The goal of the conference was to present opportunities to fill your toolbox, connect with new and old colleagues, and provide an understanding of the importance of NEOA and COE and their role in our success. We hope we did this for you! Planning and implementing a conference is challenging. The entire committee worked countless hours to provide a meaningful and relevant conference for our membership. We are proud of what we all accomplished together and are eagerly looking forward to next year's conference in the great state of Rhode Island. If you are able, volunteering to help with the conference is a wonderful way to meet new colleagues in other programs and bring new ideas to the table. I encourage you to volunteer!

Thank you, Julie Finnegan, Rachel Casey and the entire Conference Committee!



**NEOA annual business meeting**



**Achievers awardees:  
Garvy Pierre, Krystal Hicks, and Rainbow Chen**

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE UPDATES



**NEOA Executive Leadership Institute  
Participants at the conference**



**COE Update with Kim Jones**



**Presidents awardee, Linda  
Shiller-Cormany with  
President Lindsay Carpenter**

## SILENT AUCTION UPDATES:

The Silent auction that takes place at the annual NEOA conference is just one good reason to attend each year but it's also a great way to purchase something fun and know that the money you spend is going to a good cause!

It funds the Jerry Ellis PD Scholarship. This year, we made \$2922!

The Silent Auction Committee appreciates all of you who visited, bided and bided again! We appreciate those who contributed items to the auction and those who volunteered!

It's never too early to think about helping out next year! We have a great committee and we welcome more members. We also welcome volunteers to help during the conference. We wanted to let you know that we had a successful auction, thanks to most of YOU!

With gratitude,

The Silent Auction Co-Chairs: Linda Shiller-Cormany and Rachelle Lappinen

# THE JERRY ELLIS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

## NEED MONEY TO FUND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT? THE JEPD IS RECEIVING APPLICATIONS NOW!

### What's the purpose?

- To provide NEOA members with the opportunity to participate in a variety of trainings with preference given to PD 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?

- NEOA member; has worked in a TRIO/EOP program for at least 6 months; must demonstrate why their program can't pay the cost

### What types of professional development opportunities are considered?

- Must relate to Educational Opportunity work, participants they serve, and the work an applicant currently or in the near future will perform.
- Types/topics that would be eligible:
  - Direct Service; individual skill development for professional/career goals; program development, operations and enhancement
- AMLI or state/regional conference support IF their institution can't fund the cost due to various approved reason (frozen program funds, administrative specialists, etc.)

### How much will JEPD offer?

- Depending on how much the board allocates in a given year, there is a range of \$500-\$1,500 per award.

### What's the timeline/process?

- For now, the application process follows the NEOA fiscal year, has no deadline and will be awarded on a rolling basis depending on available funds.
- It's suggested 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.

**Apply now using this link: <https://www.neoaonline.org/jepd.php>**

## CONGRATULATIONS TO NEOA AWARD WINNERS

**ACHIEVERS AWARDEES:** The NEOA Achiever Awards are given to outstanding graduates of New England's regional Educational Opportunity Programs.



**LARISSA HOLLAND, ENV SP**

- Bowdoin College Upward Bound
- Aviation Sustainability Planner for C&S Companies & development advisor for justME



**RAINBOW CHEN, M.ED.**

- University of Vermont Upward Bound
- High school Humanities teacher in Vermont



**Garvey Pierre, M.A., M.S.**

- University of Massachusetts Boston Upward Bound
- White House Director for Global Engagement and Multilateral Diplomacy



**Krystal Hicks, M.Ed.**

- University of New Hampshire Student Support Services
- Founder of a non-profit and owner of a career counseling practice



## CONGRATULATIONS TO NEOA AWARD WINNERS



### **CLAIBORNE PELL AWARD:**

**Dr. Jerry L. Lewis,**  
Executive Director of Academic  
Achievement Programs at the University  
of Maryland, College Park



### **SHIRLEY CHISHOLM AWARD:**

**Senator Peter Welch,**  
Vermont State Senator



### **MARIAN BELGRAVE-HOWARD AWARD:**

**Dianne Griggs**  
Vermont GEAR UP Director

## RETIREES

**Congrats to all our retirees! We thank you for your work  
with our students, and wish you well!**



**TONY BLUETER**

UB DIRECTOR, VTSU-JOHNSON



**DIANNE M. GRIGGS**

DIRECTOR, VT STATE GEAR UP



**ELIZABETH KING**

SSS DIRECTOR, CCV



**DONNA CONNLEY**

ETS DIRECTOR, MASSEDCO

## ALUMNI CORNER

### SHAILEIGH WHITE

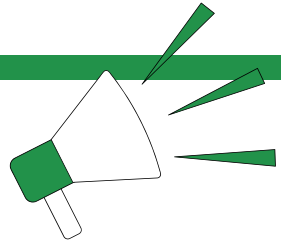


Congratulations to Shaileigh White! She is a program alumnus from SUNY Plattsburgh Upward Bound, and was recently awarded the Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence! The SUNY system in NY has 64 campuses, and this award is the highest honor bestowed by a campus - it's a BIG deal! Shaileigh persevered through the foster care system while growing up and in UB, and is now a mother of two young children herself, all while attending college and achieving academic excellence. She was invited down to Albany for special recognition and award ceremony.

### INTERESTED IN JOINING THE NEOA BOARD?



No, we won't pay you to consider joining the board or serving on a committee, BUT... the benefits are invaluable!!! Put your cash away and join us! You are welcome to attend any or all board meetings to check out what happens and how/where you might contribute. Board meeting dates are listed in this newsletter and on NEOA's website. Don't spend your money but spend some time to check it out!!!



## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The NEOA Newsletter is a compilation of all the good stuff happening in our region. ANY NEOA MEMBER is invited to submit. We always look for the following:

- Student and Alum accomplishments and contributions (awards, admissions, art, writing, etc). - Let them see that you shared their successes!
- Program News: have you done something innovative in your program that can be easily replicated? Successful fundraising? grant writing? Share with membership!
- Staff accomplishments: did someone get an award, defend their dissertation, write an article or book, etc.? Please share! WE love success stories!
- Important upcoming events and invites (conferences, other PD, etc.)
- Editorials: feel strongly about something related to college access and success? Share with others who care! Educate the membership!
- Relevant Humor. We love humor! jokes, cartoons AND PICTURES!
- "News Bites"- small pieces of info that may be relevant to the membership
- Anything else that would be relevant and appropriate for a newsletter- bring it on!

Submissions can take place at anytime. We will save what we get for the next edition.

Please submit to: Linda Shiller-Cormany at [shilcorm88@gmail.com](mailto:shilcorm88@gmail.com)

LIKE THIS NEWSLETTER? OR MAYBE  
NOT SO MUCH? TELL US WHAT YOU  
THINK! WE WANT TO DELIVER THE  
NEWS YOU WANT TO HEAR 🤔😜😄👍👎

Please email Linda at [shilcorm88@gmail.com](mailto:shilcorm88@gmail.com)  
to provide feedback, ideas, and submissions