THE COUNCILOR

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IN THIS ISSUE

02 Celebrating a Successful 2024 Annual Meeting in Atlanta

03 COE Hall of Fame Inductees

05 Commission Leadership Changes

07 Legislative Outlook

08 EDvera Webinar And Training Documents

09 Upcoming Events & Reminders

Kirk A. Nooks, Ed.D.
President & CEO,
Council on Occupational Education

Dear Esteemed Members, Commissioners, and Friends,

Happy New Year and welcome to 2025! As we embark on this fresh chapter, I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead for the Council on Occupational Education (COE) and our entire community. The start of a new year brings with it renewed energy, bold ambitions, and a shared commitment to advancing excellence in occupational education.

Reflecting on the final months of 2024, we have much to celebrate. Our Annual Meeting, held November 12-14 in Atlanta, was a resounding success! I want to send a special thank you to our amazing guest keynote speakers Kim Bearden, cofounder of the Ron Clark Academy and Dr. Chauncy Lennon of the Lumina Foundation for taking the time out of their busy schedules and sharing valuable insight with conference attendees. This was the first year that we incorporated an open proposal to presenters, so thank you for all of the guest presenters who participated in the conference. Also I'd like to thank our Thought Partners: Sikich, EDvera, Whiteford Law, and Campus Ivy for partnering with us. The event was a testament to the power of collaboration and innovation as we continue to strengthen our collective mission.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to gear up for our upcoming Spring Accreditation Institute, which will take place April 30-May 1 in Columbus, OH. This is a valuable opportunity for learning, engagement, and collaboration as we support institutions in their accreditation journeys. Early bird registration opens January 21, so be sure to mark your calendars and secure your spot early!

We are also proud of the continued progress we are making with our new accreditation system, EDvera. In this edition, you will find helpful guides designed to answer frequently asked questions and streamline your experience with this innovative platform. EDvera represents our commitment to continuous improvement and ensuring we provide our member institutions with the tools they need to succeed.

We are excited to welcome new leadership within COE, as well as new members of our Commission. Their experience, dedication, and fresh perspectives will undoubtedly strengthen our organization and help guide us into this promising new year.

Additionally, we are happy to announce that there will be no increase in membership dues or fees for FY25!

As you explore this issue of the newsletter, I encourage you to stay connected, stay inspired, and embrace the opportunities that come with a new year. Together, we will continue to build on our successes, foster meaningful partnerships, and advance the mission of COE to empower institutions, learners, and communities alike. Thank you for your continued trust, commitment, and support. Let us step boldly into 2025 with purpose, innovation, and a collective drive to achieve excellence in occupational education.

Celebrating a Successful 2024 Annual Meeting in Atlanta!

The Council on Occupational Education's 2024 Annual Meeting, held November 12-14 in Atlanta, was an extraordinary success, bringing together over 600 attendees from across the nation and around the globe. This year's event featured an exciting lineup of over 16 guest speakers, eight new session topics, and the invaluable support of four Thought Partners who contributed to the dynamic energy of the conference.

We were honored to welcome two distinguished guest keynote speakers: Kim Bearden, Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Ron Clark Academy, and Dr. Chauncy Lennon, Vice President for Learning and Work at the Lumina Foundation. Their inspiring addresses challenged and motivated attendees to think deeply about the future of career and technical education.

Attendees also enjoyed several fun and interactive elements, including a lively Welcome Reception and the engaging Passport Activity, which encouraged participants to connect with our Thought Partners and explore opportunities for collaboration.

A Special Business Meeting was held on November 14, 2024, where the following key items were addressed:

- A report from the Council Committee on Nominations.
- Amendments to the Handbook of Accreditation.
- Updates to the Council on Occupational Education By-Laws.

We were proud to introduce four new Hall of Fame Awards during this year's event, honoring individuals and member institutions whose exceptional contributions have advanced COE's mission and values.

Thank you to everyone who made this Annual Meeting a success—our attendees, speakers, sponsors, Affinity Group Leaders, and Thought Partners. Your engagement and support continue to drive COE's commitment to quality and excellence in occupational education.

We look forward to another impactful year ahead and can't wait to see you at our upcoming Spring Accreditation Institute in Columbus, OH!

SIKICH
WHITEFORD
EDvera
Licensing & Accreditation Management Software
CampusIvy

COE Hall of Fame Inductees

COE introduced four new Hall of Fame Awards during this year's Annual Meeting, honoring individuals and member institutions whose exceptional contributions have advanced COE's mission and values. "We are incredibly proud to honor these remarkable leaders and institutions for their commitment to excellence and their profound impact on occupational education," said Dr. Kirk Nooks, President and CEO of the Council on Occupational Education. "Their achievements exemplify the best of what we strive to accomplish as an organization."

The 2024 honorees include:
· **Chief Administrative Officer Hall of Fame Award**:
Clay Christensen, Mountainland Technical College
· **COE Liaison Hall of Fame Award:**
Denise Myers, Center for Information Warfare
· **Excellence in Community Service/Economic Impact Award**: Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy
· **Excellence in Occupational Workforce Partnership Award:**
Baldwin Park Adult & Community Education

Stay tuned for the upcoming open nominations on February 3, 2025, for the "**Sue Schooler" Hall of Fame Award** that will be presented during the Spring Accreditation Institute.

Member Institution Anniversary Celebration

We are thrilled to honor the remarkable milestones of our COE member institutions, celebrating 25 to 50 years of accreditation! These schools have demonstrated a long-standing commitment to excellence in occupational education, and we are proud to recognize their dedication and impact on the field. We recognized these institutions during our Annual Meeting.

Celebrating 50 Years
- Lake Technical College
- Sheridan Technical College
- Tennessee College of Applied Technology - Crump
- Tennessee College of Applied Technology - Dickson
- Tennessee College of Applied Technology - Henry Carroll

Celebrating 45 Years
- Houston Training Schools
- Okaloosa Technical College

Celebrating 40 Years
- Naval Medical Forces Development Command (NMFDC)
- Withlacoochee Technical College

Celebrating 35 Years
- Center for Advanced Legal Studies
- Brewster Technical College
- Nuvani Institute
- Denham Springs Beauty College
- William T. McFatter Technical College
- Aveda Institute Wilmington
- Paul Mitchell the School Roanoke
- Interactive College of Technology - Texas
- Interactive College of Technology - Georgia

Celebrating 30 Years
- Atlanta Institute of Music and Media
- Rivertown School of Beauty, Barber, Skin Care, and Nails
- Genesis Career College
- Sarasota School of Massage Therapy
- Brillare Beauty Institute
- The Praxis Institute

Celebrating 25 Years
- Academy for Nursing and Health Occupations
- Advanced Barber College and Hair Design
- Chester Career College
- US Army Infantry School
- Milan Institute - San Antonio

Missed the Annual Conference?
We heard your feedback and created a replay! Here's your chance to watch two of our General Sessions from the conference, including keynote speakers Dr. Kirk Nooks and Dr. Chauncy Lennon!

Visit https://council.org/video to gain access to the replay.

The purpose of the Spring Accreditation Institute (former Summer Conference) is to prepare institutions for initial and reaffirmation accreditation. Workshops offered during the Institute will focus on the practical applications of maintaining compliance with accreditation standards. Team Member and Team Leader certification training will also be available. All our members are welcome to attend and network with other postsecondary leaders.

Early Registration opens on January 21, 2025 at discounted rate of $595. February 3, 2025 regular registration rates will apply at $675.

Commission Leadership Changes

COE has announced changes in leadership and the election of new members to the board. These changes decided during the Annual Business Meeting on November 14, 2024, in Atlanta, reflect COE's ongoing commitment to excellence and innovation in occupational education. COE announced Dr. Gwen Sutton, President of the Tennessee College of Applied Technology - Memphis, as the newly elected Commission Chair.

Dr. Sutton brings over 20 years of experience in technical education and workforce development. Under her leadership, TCAT Memphis has been recognized for innovation in curriculum design and partnerships with key industries, ensuring students are prepared for competitive careers. Dr. Sutton assumes the chair effective January 1, 2025, succeeding Kim Ziebarth, associate commissioner for technical education at the Utah System of Higher Education.

"I am honored to serve as the incoming chair of COE and to continue the legacy of advancing occupational education," said Dr. Sutton. "The Council plays a pivotal role in ensuring high-quality standards for our member institutions, and I look forward to working with my fellow commissioners to empower students and institutions nationwide."

Outgoing chair Kim Ziebarth reflected on her tenure and welcomed Sutton's leadership:
"It has been a privilege to serve as COE chair and work alongside dedicated leaders committed to excellence in occupational education," Ziebarth said. "Dr. Sutton's expertise and passion for workforce development will be instrumental in guiding the Council forward."

COE membership also elected two new members to the Commission:
• Russell Penner: Director/Principal, James Rumsey Technical Institute, Martinsburg, WV
• Laura Travis: President, Tennessee College of Applied Technology - Dickson and Clarksville, Dickson, TN

Check our website for a full listing of all current Commissioners and Committees of the Council at www.council.org

COE Names and Faces

As we start a new year in alignment with our new strategic plan, we have made some leadership changes at the Council on Occupational Education (COE). Shelia Luke has been appointed as Vice President of Institutional Compliance, Scott Deidun, MBA has been appointed as Vice President of Agency Operations, Dr. Carlton Green has been appointed as Director of Institutional Data, Reporting and Compliance, a new position in the area of Compliance and Susie Hill has been appointed as Administrative Coordinator in the Institutional Evaluations Division.

With over 20 years of experience in education, including 10 years at the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Shelia brings a wealth of expertise in accreditation, peer review, and strategic planning. A highly accomplished professional, she holds advanced degrees in Reliability Engineering (MS, University of Maryland) and Mechanical Engineering (MS, Georgia Institute of Technology), along with a BS in Physics/Electronics Engineering from Norfolk State University. Her impressive background will be invaluable in advancing COE's mission of ensuring quality and excellence in career and technical education.

Scott is originally from the Detroit area and holds a BS in Biological Sciences from Wayne State University and an MBA from Walsh College in Michigan. Scott has worked in adult education since 2009, serving in various leadership and executive roles, including 9 years as the President & CEO of a school in the DC Metropolitan area.

Prior to serving in adult education, Scott was a partner in a financial services firm. Scott moved to the Atlanta area in November of 2024 and is thrilled to be a part of such a dynamic organization committed to helping schools and students thrive!

Dr. Carlton Greene is a seasoned professional with over 25 years of experience in higher education administration, specializing in academic leadership, enrollment management, compliance, and student retention. Passionate about fostering organizational success and lifelong learning, he excels in developing innovative, high-quality programs that drive engagement, inclusivity, and school-wide transformation.

Dr. Greene holds a doctorate in Assessment Learning and Student Success in Higher Education from Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, along with an MBA in management from Troy University in Troy, Alabama.

Susie is an Atlanta native and brings with her over 20 years of experience in education and administrative procedures. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Clemson University and a Master's Degree in Reading Education from University of Georgia.

Legislative Outlook

As the new year begins, the Trump administration assumes office for a second term, marking a shift in federal leadership. With both the House and Senate under Republican control, higher education policy is expected to be a prominent focus in the upcoming legislative agenda.

Key Appointments and Leadership Changes

Department of Education:
Linda McMahon will take on the role of the Secretary of Education, bringing experience from her prior service in the first Trump administration. Her leadership will likely shape the administration's education policies moving forward. During Trump's first term in office, McMahon served as the Small Business Administration Administrator.

House Education and Workforce Committee:

- Michigan Representative Tim Walberg (R-MI) has been selected to lead the committee. He will succeed outgoing Committee Chair Virginia Foxx of North Carolina.
- Ranking Member Representative Robert "Bobby" Scott of Virginia (D-VA) will continue his leadership role for the minority party. The Democratic side also faces changes, with four seats to be filled on the committee.
- The committee faces significant restructuring, with six Republican seats needing to be filled due to retirements, electoral losses, or appointments to other positions within the Trump administration.

Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee:

- Bill Cassidy, M.D. (R-LA) will serve as the chairman of the HELP Committee, positioning him as a key voice in shaping education and labor policy discussions in the Senate.
- Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) will continue his work on the HELP Committee as the Ranking Member.

With these leadership shifts, the Republican-controlled Congress is expected to prioritize reforms in higher education, workforce development, and related areas. The upcoming months will reveal more specific policy initiatives as committees are fully staffed and begin their work under new leadership on January 3. Stay tuned for further updates as the legislative session unfolds.

The Commission will be visiting Capitol Hill in June during our June Commission Meeting June 9-12, 2025. If there is an interest to join the group on the Hill, contact Dr. Susan Wright at susan.wright@council.org.

EDvera Webinar And Training Documents

Did you miss the EDvera Q&A session at the 2024 Annual Meeting? Here's another chance to get the information you need! Join us on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, from 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM EST, for an insightful webinar hosted by the Council on Occupational Education and presented by Dr. Laura Vieth, CEO of EDvera, and Stephanie Jones, Director of Client Success.

This is a unique opportunity to learn about:

- The history of EDvera and its evolution.
- Updates to EDvera designed specifically to meet the needs of COE institutions.
- The strong partnership between EDvera and COE.
- Q&A with live demos

Register for Free: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VBCR6L7

After registering, you'll receive a **Teams link** to join the webinar.

Can't make the webinar? Here are some helpful documents we've created to address common EDvera concerns, including uploading documents, submitting Year-End Reports, and completing Self-Study Reports:

How to Submit Supporting Documents: Click Here

How to Submit Self-Study: Click Here

How to Submit Annual Report in EDVera: Click Here

You may also visit our website to other helpful forms at:
www.council.org/applications-and-forms/

Save The Dates

Spring Accreditation Institute
Our Spring Accreditation Institute will take place April 30 – May 1, 2025, at the Marriott Downtown, Columbus, OH. Early registration will open on January 21, 2025, with regular registration beginning February 4, 2025. The early registration price will be $595.00 for the first 100 registrants, and the regular registration price will be $675.00. If you have a recommendation for a Thought Partner for the conference, please contact Mia Johnson, mia.johnson@council.org.

Annual Meeting 2025
Our Annual Meeting will take place November 11-13, 2025 in Austin, TX. If you have a recommendation for a Thought Partner for the conference, please contact Mia Johnson, mia.johnson@council.org.

For more details and registration links visit https://council.org/events/.

Nominations for the "Sue Schooler" Hall of Fame Award
Nominations for the "Sue Schooler" Hall of Fame Award will open up on February 3, 2025. This award recognizes outstanding Team Leaders and Team Members. Stay tuned for the link for nominations.

June Day at the Capitol
June Day at the Capitol will be held during the Summer Commission meeting which is set for June 9-12, 2025. More information will be available in the April Newsletter.

Important Updates and Reminders

Membership Fees & Dues - There will be no changes in dues/fees for the upcoming 2026 Fiscal Year (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026) You can find the current fees and dues schedule on our website at this link: https://council.org/annual-membership-dues/. If you have any questions or find any issues, please email COE at accounting@council.org.

- **March Commission Meeting Materials** - The deadline to submit materials to be included in the March Meeting is **January 22, 2025**. To find all of the upcoming deadlines visit: https://council.org/application-due-dates/.

- **Annual Report** - The Annual Report for FY24 is due on **March 15, 2025**. Starting with FY25, the due date will return to December 15, aligning with the original schedule prior to the recent change. This adjustment ensures more accurate and timely data processing through EDvera. We strongly recommend member institutions adopt one of the most common reporting periods:
  - July 1 – June 30
  - January 1 – December 31
  - August 1 – July 31

  Alternatively, member institutions may select a different reporting period if necessary, but it must remain consistent year-to-year. For detailed instructions, please refer to the Annual Report Manual.