



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 10, 2023

Contact: Lynne Baker

847.831.8024

Lynne.Baker@illinois.gov

ISAC Hosts 13th Annual College Changes Everything® Conference: DEIA: The Work We Need to Do

Back In-person July 13, 2023, Will Offer 38 Interest Sessions

CHICAGO – The [Illinois Student Assistance Commission \(ISAC\)](#) is pleased to announce that the [13th annual College Changes Everything® \(CCE\) Conference](#), the state’s preeminent college access and success and career readiness event, will be back in person this Thursday, July 13, 2023 from 8 am to 4 pm at the Tinley Park Convention Center. Sponsored by ISAC and statewide partners, this annual conference brings together diverse stakeholders from across the state to promote access to postsecondary education, help ensure degree or credential attainment, and support work to develop and promote effective career pathways to help Illinois reach its Goal 2025 – to increase the proportion of adults in Illinois with high-quality degrees and postsecondary credentials to 60% by the year 2025. During this year’s conference, themed **DEIA: The Work We Need to Do**, equity designers from all over the state will collaborate in addressing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) issues to help inform and support a system where DEIA is holistically ingrained within us and the work we do to support students and families.

“The obstacles to higher education encountered by students and families of color, first generation students, rural students, and low-income students have not gone away,” said Executive Director of ISAC Eric Zarnikow. “These obstacles persist, from lack of college-going experience, financial pressures, racial discrimination, and more, and they continue to disadvantage students with talent and promise. If we are to make headway in ensuring that all students have the opportunities for higher education that they deserve, we must examine ourselves and our own work, and come together to build and support a truly equitable system. We are pleased to offer the CCE Conference as an opportunity to learn, collaborate and strategize to support this critical work.”

The conference will begin with a plenary session featuring [Dr. Susie Wise](#), author of ***Design for Belonging: How to Build Inclusion and Collaboration in Your Communities***. Dr. Wise is a design leader with experience in the education, tech, and social sectors who coaches leaders in equity design and innovation practices. She teaches at the d.school at Stanford University and coaches with the Mira Fellowship.

DEIA: The Work We Need to Do will offer thirty-eight breakout interest sessions, presented by state and national experts and practitioners, that will cover a wide range of topics, including navigating the college-going process; the complexity and opportunities of student-centered DEIA work; supporting

--more--

special student populations; college and career readiness for all; equity in higher education, changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®), Illinois initiatives such as the PaCE Framework and ISAC's First Generation Scholars Network, and more.

Attendees include college access practitioners; high school leaders, counselors, and case managers; college and university leaders and administrators; employers and workforce development professionals; policymakers and elected officials interested in higher education and career readiness; and learners themselves.

The registration fee is \$40 and space fills quickly. To register for the conference and view the agenda, visit <https://www.collegechangeseverything.org/events/2023-cce-conference-information.html>. Use #CCE4me to join the conversation on social media.

The College Changes Everything Conference is sponsored by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission in collaboration with partners: Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois College Access Network, Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities, Advance Illinois, Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University, ACT Now, and Women Employed.

About College Changes Everything

College Changes Everything® (CCE) is a college access movement that recognizes that college can be a life changing experience not only for students, but also for families and communities. In Illinois and across the nation, those who obtain education beyond high school not only see a significant impact on their potential career prospects and future salary, but also change levels of poverty, life expectancy, crime, and obesity rates in their communities. CCE is an essential part of helping Illinois reach its goal of increasing the proportion of adults in the state with high quality degrees or credentials to 60% by 2025. Find out more and join the conversation at collegechangeseverything.org.

About ISAC

The mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is to provide Illinois students with information and assistance to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information on education and financial aid for students and their families—giving them access to the tools they need to make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers, ISAC can help students make those choices a reality. Find us at isac.org or on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ILStudentAssistance) (@ILStudentAssistance), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ISACfinaid), on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ISACfinaid) @ISACfinaid, and check out our videos on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/ISACvid) @ISACvid.

###