

President's Letter



Dear IOSS colleagues:

Thanks so much for all of your effort serving our students and making our institutions such vibrant and relevant parts of our communities. I am looking forward to serving as president again, and I want to recognize all of the contributions of our executive board, who have helped maintain and improve our organization. We have all built a valuable support system, particularly considering the challenges of the recent years, and I am looking forward to even greater accomplishments in the coming years.

We had a great conference this last fall, and I would like to thank our membership for making the conference such a success. As we discovered through the variety of presentations, our community offers a valuable range of insights and expertise in the most pertinent and current issues impacting our students and institutions. IOSS provides a forum for us to encounter new ideas, share insights, and build support across institutions in our state, so our colleagues know they are not isolated in their efforts and challenges. To help continue this role, I would like to encourage members to consider the topics which may be valuable to consider for future conferences and to share ideas with the board. The board welcomes ideas from the membership for future subjects and speakers.

One of the most valuable aspects of IOSS remains the variety of topics and disciplines it supports. Our organization addresses challenges which impact students and instructors across the curriculum and

In this edition

- [IOSS Board Transitions](#)
- [IOSS Student Scholarship](#)
- [IOSS 2023 Conference Highlights](#)
- [Outstanding Service to Students Award](#)
- [Library Database Resources](#)

throughout our institutions. I believe it is important to expand our connections to multiple areas within our organizations. Faculty, librarians, and academic support services must coordinate to support struggling students and address the broad range of obstacles students must overcome. Subsequently, I believe it is imperative to share the benefits of IOSS and NOSS with interested colleagues throughout our institutions, and I encourage our members to help us build membership across the state. IOSS members have made vital contributions to student success in our institutions, and members have continued to keep IOSS connected to important topics in the profession. IOSS, in many ways, serves as a voice for our students and colleagues as we navigate the challenges of our profession. I invite members to contribute their ideas to the organization, participate in leadership, and help continue building a foundation for the future.

Thanks for your support, and I am looking forward to a great year.

Dan Nelson, DMAcc, IOSS President 2023-2024

Past President's Letter



It is hard to believe we are already two months into 2024! I hope your semester is going well thus far, and I also hope you are remembering to take some time for yourselves when things get too crazy and stressful! I want to thank each of you for being a member of IOSS, and a special

THANK YOU goes out to our IOSS board members. I appreciate the extra time they spend each month serving on this board.

Thanks to those of you who attended the IOSS conference at DMACC's Urban Campus in November. I was sad I had to miss (due to an illness) but heard wonderful things about the keynote speakers and the session presenters. It is also great to be back in person for this event, as the impromptu conversations and the connections we make with others are always my favorite part about professional development events. Many of these presentations can be found on our website, under the Member Resources tab ([Iowa Organization for Student Success IOSS](#)) This edition of the *Reader's Corner* also includes a recap of some of the presenters. Please check out these articles and additional resources and share them with others!

We are happy to announce that we have two new IOSS board members: Kathrine Rogers of Iowa Lakes and Sabrina Valentine of WITCC. We appreciate the input and expertise they have provided thus far! Our board is always taking more volunteers, though, so if you are interested in joining in any capacity, please reach out to me or another IOSS member. As a board member, you will learn more about the organization and build relationships with others around the state and the nation.

The National Organization for Student Success (NOSS) annual conference was held February 14-17 in Las Vegas, NV. Several of us from the IOSS board were in attendance and are excited to share more about what we learned in the next *Reader's Corner*. In my opinion, this is one of the best conferences for student success advisors, educators, and leaders. In the future, check out this conference and make plans to attend, if possible! Also, if you are not a current NOSS member, I would encourage you to join. This is our national organization, and they support many of the efforts we are doing on a state-wide level. The mission of NOSS is to assist education professionals in making a positive difference in the lives of students. NOSS provides many professional development opportunities, free networks related to various topics revolving around student success, and resources for those who work in developmental education, tutoring, advising, etc. Check them out at www.thenoss.org.

If you would still like to donate books for our America Reads campaign, you can do so by purchasing a book or two at this link: [Stowe Elementary School Gift List](#) .

Lastly, I want to remind you of two excellent ways to give back to your colleagues and students. Submitting a nomination for the Outstanding Educator Award. is a great opportunity to show gratitude to a colleague who has positively impacted both the students they serve and the institution they work at. Also, be sure to inform students about the IOSS Student Scholarship opportunity. This \$500 scholarship is sent directly to the student to be used for college expenses. A link for both forms can be found on our website or our Facebook page.

I hope you all have a wonderful spring semester. Thank you again for being an IOSS member!

*Molly Struve, NIACC,
IOSS Past President, IOSS Secretary 2023-2024*

2023 IOSS Student Scholarship Award

The 2023 IOSS Student Scholarship was awarded to Nicholas Guo Ming Boon, who applied as a Western Iowa Tech Student and is now attending the University of South Dakota. Congratulations to Nicholas and to the Comet Learning Center instructors and tutors who encouraged him on his academic journey! Here is an excerpt from his letter of application for the scholarship:

The Comet Learning Center (CLC) at Western Iowa Tech Community College (WITCC) is the most valuable resource for students to become the most effective versions of themselves. Tutors and instructors at the CLC allow us the students to learn by asking questions, clarifying what we learn in our classes, and most importantly, providing an out-of-class opportunity to learn through interaction with others. It is through these interactions that we, as students, grow in the depth of our understanding.

When I started my first semester, I lacked confidence in my writing skills. I had difficulty structuring my thoughts and entered college with low self-efficacy in my writing abilities due to being repeatedly told in high school that my proficiency in grammar and writing was inadequate. Since my course is in the social sciences, I was nervous about producing essays and used to spend hours being stuck trying to pen down my thoughts. My first interaction with the CLC was with a tutor who motivated me by highlighting the strengths in my writing and offering suggestions to guide me in improving them. Academic writing can be tricky, as it is vastly different from day-to-day writing, but with the support of the CLC, I was able to ease into writing for college. Through their help, although I still occasionally doubt my writing, I now feel much more confident in myself. Achieving an A in Composition I and II would not have been possible

without the CLC, and today, I feel more confident that I can articulate my thoughts and succeed in my college classes.

Another area that I am grateful for at the CLC is the sharing by the instructors of their educational journey. Being a first-generation non-traditional student from a lower middle-class family, I used to limit my aspirations and was content with just getting through college. I remember one conversation I had with one of the instructors at the CLC; he asked me to consider doing a Ph.D. given my interest in Sociology, as he thought that I would enjoy the process. Unbeknownst to him, that conversation sparked my consideration of seriously studying further, as hitherto no one had ever encouraged me to pursue higher education beyond a bachelor's degree. I used to think that I was not "smart enough" to pursue further studies, but that conversation and his belief gave me the confidence to try. For the first time in my life, I am contemplating pursuing graduate studies after my bachelor's degree, as I have a passion for learning and their journey shows me the possibility of chasing a higher dream.

Applications Open for 2024 IOSS Student Scholarship

The Iowa Organization for Student Success (IOSS) Executive Board is again accepting applications for a student who has excelled in developmental coursework. Please take time to share this scholarship opportunity with students at your school. Below is the link where students will find the information needed to apply for this \$500 scholarship. Applications are due by June 1, 2024.

<https://forms.gle/EvE5C1gHNmHgZJBe8>

IOSS 2023 Conference Highlights



Thanks! We Needed That!

To help IOSS members put their conference theme—"impacting the world, one student at a time"—into practice, both Brenda Clark Hamilton and Meredith Sides, this year's keynote speakers, emphasized strategies for selfcare, needed now more than ever by higher education faculty, staff, and students!

In her presentation titled "The Mentally Strong Educator (or Student!)" Ms. Hamilton suggested constructing positive mental scenarios, thinking "I can get through this" instead of "I'll never get this done." She presented ARG (**anticipate, recollect something good that has happened, express gratitude**) as three steps to create a more positive outlook every day. She cautioned us to be alert to the lenses we wear based on prior experiences that distort present reality, getting our brains stuck in feelings of failure, guilt, and victimhood. She encouraged us to create our own identities instead of simply reflecting or internalizing what others say we're like. Rather than acquiescing to the negative vibes round us, she said, we can be the ones to create a new, better normal.

In her Friday keynote address, "Changing the Course of the Future: Exploring Our Everyday

Impact," NOSS President Meredith Sides used her own personal and professional experiences to illustrate the difference one person can make. She asked us to visualize our legacy family tree, considering who has been a positive influence in our lives and, in turn, what we will leave behind for others. Noting that a job title makes no difference, she said that even the smallest person can change the course of the future and urged us to make kindness and empathy our default. Her simple and powerful message was "Go out into the world and do good things."

If you need an attitude adjustment at the end of a challenging class/day/week/semester, review the PowerPoints from these keynote presentations, which are available on the IOSS Member Resources page at <https://internal.dmacc.edu/ioss/SitePages/memberresources.aspx>

Sue Wickham, MCHS, Newsletter Editor/Webmaster

"Back to the Future of College Reading" *Dan Nelson and Heather Tisdale,* *Des Moines Area Community College*

Impacted by recent reforms and the challenges of the pandemic, support for college-level reading has experienced a notable reduction across institutions. Inconsistency in assessment and placement procedures miss students who may benefit from reading support, and with fewer courses or access to support opportunities, students who seek support are unable to find options which fit into their educational experience. As instructors discover, challenges with literacy and common reading expectations not only continue, but, in some cases, these problems may have become more pronounced as struggling students navigate their college courses, particularly as courses have evolved into a combination of online and in-person environments.

Instructors at Des Moines Area Community College recently formed a committee to examine the opportunities to improve reading support within the current structure of the institution while adapting to the trends within the student population.

Recognizing the value of targeting both faculty and students, the committee decided to pursue support initiatives through technology to help instructors across the curriculum engage literacy as a foundational part of their courses and to encourage the integration of reading support into individual courses.

Major considerations for the committee involved both addressing faculty concerns related to literacy and encouraging faculty connection to the improvement of literacy skills. The committee distributed a college-wide survey and invited faculty to identify their concerns, which ultimately reflected the observation of both basic skill problems and common habits which inhibited effective reading. Faculty in multiple fields identified problems such as vocabulary-building and second-language ability along with recurring, problematic behaviors, including lack of note-taking and avoiding reading assigned material altogether. These responses allowed the committee to recognize faculty concerns and frustrations while also building a supportive connection with the faculty. To augment the survey, the committee interviewed a variety of instructors from multiple disciplines to help identify both their specific observations and discipline-specific reading strategies and priorities. This collaborative process served as the basis for the committee's decisions in building a faculty "toolbox" which may be easily accessed through the college's learning management system.

To begin building a reading resource for the entire college, the committee first addressed creating engaging and practical tools for students to access and use to build their reading habits for college

expectations. The first effort involves a set of creative videos which attempt to demonstrate and model effective, active reading strategies, from creating a study plan to annotation. This process presents the added benefit of involving the college video and film production classes, so the videos offer opportunities for student experience and representation. To accompany these videos, faculty and students will have a set of reading guides and graphic organizers, which may be accessed by students or integrated into course assignments by faculty. Not only will this provide options for both faculty and students, but it will create a consistent set of strategies which may be repeated across the institution in multiple courses, which may then encourage habits throughout a student's entire experience at the college.

Along with student guidance, part of the reading initiative continues encouraging and supporting faculty. The set of guides and organizers are intended to provide tools to augment an instructor's course, and the committee plans to recruit individual faculty to create videos presenting their tactics and advice for supporting reading in their specific courses and disciplines. These videos will provide a form of mentoring and modeling to help other faculty consider reading skills as part of the course and provide peer support to adapt approaches to multiple courses.

With the challenges facing both students and faculty, the current demands in college create a difficult environment for the support of reading strategies. More students are interacting with their courses through online learning systems, which are often reading intensive, and many of these students may not be identified or placed for reading support, which not only creates obstacles for students, but leaves faculty with few options to assist these students. Despite the changes which have impacted the field, our reading committee continues to recognize the value and importance of reading

support for our students and believe, with faculty collaboration and the use of the college's current technology, this initiative will reach a broad range of students while building a stronger appreciation of literacy across the institution.

Dan Nelson, DMACC, IOSS President, 2023-2024

"Iowa Department of Education Updates"
*Kelly Friesleben, Division of Higher Education,
Bureau of Community Colleges
and Postsecondary Readiness*

Kelly Friesleben presented DOE updates on statewide projects with implications for IOSS members and their institutions.

The Iowa eTranscript project is an effort to simplify and standardize high school transcripts, allowing high school counselors to send transcripts to postsecondary institutions showing a standardized GPA, using a consistent course code regardless of variations in course titles at different high schools, and including accolades received by students. Attendees raised questions about how special education and ELL courses would be designated. The next step in this project will be pilot testing with three high school districts to validate the data.

The department is continuing to update an online transfer major discipline framework aligning programs offered by community colleges with those in receiving four-year institutions, both Regents and private colleges. Data collected will be shared in an outcomes report showing both enrollment and how transfer students fare.

Third, the department is promoting guided pathways programs at community colleges, in an effort to streamline course selection related to specific career goals. A question was raised regarding how to assist

students with developmental needs within the guided pathways framework.

This question related directly to the final section of the presentation, which dealt specifically with developmental education. As institutions have moved away from placement testing and in some cases from offering any developmental education courses at all, it has become more difficult to track numbers of students who need developmental education. How are Composition I students assigned to corequisite courses tracked? What about students needing basic arithmetic who are enrolled in a 100-level course labeled Technical Math? Ms. Friesleben noted that disrupted education during the early years of COVID meant that many recent high school graduates need additional help to fill the gaps in their academic skills.

The PowerPoint for this presentation is available in the IOSS Member Resources page at <https://internal.dmacc.edu/ioss/SitePages/memberresources.aspx>

Sue Wickham, MCHS, Newsletter Editor/Webmaster

**2023 IOSS Outstanding Service
to Students Award**

In response to a compelling nomination letter by Mike Cagley, Western Iowa Tech Community College (WITCC), below, the IOSS Executive Board voted unanimously to present the 2023 IOSS Outstanding Service to Students Award to Logan Frederick, a staff member in the Comet Learning Center at WITCC. Logan was able to attend the conference to receive his award.

Logan joined the Comet Learning Center (CLC) just one year ago in the role of secretary. In one year, he has taken on a role that is closer to a student orientation specialist for nearly all of our

students who come to the CLC for help outside of specific academic subjects. While managing his other secretarial duties, he has become my primary assistant for troubleshooting all student technical issues that are outside of the purview of the Information Technologies Department or Distance Learning Department.

To point out just one example of the kind of work we do, I will outline developments at my institution regarding Cengage Group. In 2020, Western Iowa Tech Community College entered into a contract with Cengage Group, which has led to nearly all of our courses either using open educational resources or Cengage Unlimited materials. The shift somehow resulted in me, Mike Cagley, as the primary troubleshooter for all issues with Canvas educational resource access. The issues can escalate so quickly that I will spend about 75% of my time at the start of a semester doing technical troubleshooting. Without these issues being addressed, students would not be able to access their course materials if the course used Cengage Unlimited, which in turn leads to high risk for dropping or failing courses. High-risk student populations in general (e.g., nontraditional students, students needing remediation, low-income students, first-generation students, minority students) experience even higher occurrence of issues with these technical challenges because most of the challenges are related to lack of technology literacy as well as lack of experience with a learning management system (LMS). Neither of these areas was part of the work Logan had been doing prior to working in the CLC. However, in one year's time, he has become one of the best troubleshooters on campus, with his name even mentioned on more than one occasion during WITCC Executive Council meetings.

Also, over the last year, he has developed a solid understanding of the Canvas LMS to help orient

students to their courses in Canvas, identify what materials they will need for their courses, and help with other technology skill development relevant to success in the changing world of education.

Keep in mind, Logan does all this while also handling the main phone line, filing materials as necessary, and doing other secretarial work (e.g., making copies for me!) as needed. He has redefined the secretary position to become a student orientation specialist for the CLC, and I proudly nominate him for the 2023 IOSS Outstanding Service to Students Award.



Mike Cagley presents the Outstanding Service to Students Award to Logan Frederick.

2024 Outstanding Service to Students Award Nominations

We are excited to have the opportunity to celebrate and recognize an educator who demonstrates outstanding service and impacts student success!

We encourage each of our members to review the criteria on the form available on the [Member Resources](#) page of the IOSS website at and nominate a deserving faculty member, staff member, and/or administrator for this honor. You will find the full process and award details, as well as the online application, on the nomination form at

<https://forms.gle/48LMLVxXfBtH11qA9>

Submit nominations by June 1, 2024.

Please note that nominees do not have to be current members of IOSS to be eligible for the award.

Librarian *Shhh*elf of Treasures: Academic Databases in Review

Boost learning experiences with quality academic databases! Uncover hidden gems, discover new features, and help students become fact checkers!

It is an honor to join the IOSS Executive Board. College Librarians are full of fantastic information. This article presents three academic databases worth exploring. Each one will empower faculty and students to connect with course content and during research projects. I have also included one of my most recent Ed Tech finds that makes synchronous presentations interactive and highly engaging.

1. America's News/Newsbank

Explore global news and thousands of primary resources from over 200 countries. Search geographical regions on a global map.

Browse a wide variety of topics including Business and Economics, Criminal Justice, Education, Environment Studies, Health, International Studies, Job and Careers, People, and Performing and Fine Arts.

Watch for an inclusion of image-based content which will be available starting in February.

2. Bloom's Literacy Reference Center

Explore the most frequently studied authors and their works, prize-winners, and cultural classics. Over 120,000 articles from books, critical essays, and reference guides.

Almost 6,000 images of authors, maps, and handwritten documents. Over 8,500 video clips from full-length movies capable of being embedded into almost all learning management systems.

View eight timelines available from ancient to modern literature and frequently updated scholarly journals and other periodicals.

3. CINAHL with Full Text EBSCO (Nursing focused database)

Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) database covers the literature of nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, nutrition and dietetics, and other health-related professions.

Search images, graphs, maps, charts, diagrams, and almost 1,500 active global open access journals.

ED TECH BONUS: CHECK OUT CLASSPOINT

My hunt began in earnest for a way to make upcoming presentations more engaging and interactive for literature students. I found [ClassPoint](#) which is a PowerPoint add-on. Wow! It allows you to create slides during your lesson.

Why would you want to do that? Ask your students a multiple choice or short answer question, take a poll on content or wellness, generate a word cloud with a push of a button. Highlight, write on slides, or add annotations while presenting your lesson. If those aren't enough reasons to pique your interest... how about gamification? I can't *wait* to give this new tool a whirl!

The basic version is free. Download the app and log into ClassPoint from PowerPoint. The toolbar will appear at the top of the slide. Upgrade to ClassPoint Pro for the gamification features, up to 200 students (compared to 20 in the basic version), assess student knowledge with draggable images in Quiz Mode, and much more!

Conclusion

Check out the vast range of resources and databases available through your college library. Contact your librarian for more information or me at krogers@iowalakes.edu

Kathrine Rogers, ILCC, Community College Representative

NOSS Research Update

Each month, NOSS members receive an email detailing current research and resources related to student success. The January 2024 newsletter announced publication of the third edition of *Essential Glossary for Increasing Postsecondary Student Success: Administrators, Faculty, Staff, and Policymakers*, prepared and edited by David R. Arendale for the College Reading and Learning Association.

Do you ever struggle to define a term like *intersectionality* or *grit*? Are you curious about different approaches to *accelerated learning programs*? Are you preparing for a presentation to an audience unfamiliar with the field of developmental education? If so, this resource is for you. Reading just one entry is like eating just one M&M—not gonna happen!

The glossary is divided into nine sections: teaching and learning process, antiracism and racism, assessment, copyright and academic integrity, pedagogies for teaching and learning, program management, student-to-student learning, transitional courses and program, and less acceptable terms. All terms are carefully defined, with citations provided for the definitions and a complete list of references at the end. This 67-page resource is free under Creative Commons licensing and available online at https://crla.net/images/whitepaper/CRLA_2023_EssentialGlossary_FA.pdf

Sue Wickham, MCHS, Newsletter Editor/Webmaster

America Reads 2023-2024



IOSS is pleased to continue our participation in the America Reads program. Recipients of our book donations for 2023-2024 are the students at Stowe Elementary School in Des Moines. Teachers and students are delighted with the new books they've received so far! The teacher librarian at the school wrote this note in October:

I am thrilled to have the Who Would Win collection in our library! When I showed the new books to my first class after receiving them, I got an excited chorus of "Whoa!" and they are already checked out! Thank you!

Catherine (Cat) Morris

Through the summer of 2024, IOSS members can continue to donate children's books from the Stowe Elementary School Amazon Gift List:

<https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/23M9S51MC83H9>

IMPORTANT: When checking out, on the *Choose a Shipping Address* page, make sure to have the books sent to the school address:

Stowe Elementary School
Attn: Claudia Gonzalez
1411 E 33rd Street
Des Moines, IA 50317-2701

Check the IOSS website at
https://internal.dmacc.edu/ioSS/SitePages/Fall_Preview.aspx
for updates on the
fall 2024 conference.

Reconnect with colleagues
from around the state.

Share your triumphs, projects, and
concerns in a breakout session or
roundtable.

Join the IOSS Conversation

- Have you recently attended a conference of another professional organization? Summarize a session relevant to our membership for the *Reader's Corner*.
- Has your institution revamped its placement policies, developmental studies offerings, or academic support program? Provide a quick update.
- Have you located a great academic resource for student or faculty to use? Share the wealth.
- Have you transitioned to a new position or received special recognition for your professional accomplishments? Let us celebrate with you!

To submit articles or information for future editions of the *Reader's Corner*, please send to:

IOSS Newsletter Editor, Sue Wickham
breemersm@centurylink.net

2023-2024 IOSS Executive Board

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Amy Moffitt, ICCS
Member at Large: Sabrina Valentine, WITCC

Stay in Touch with IOSS and NOSS

IOSS Website:

Check the IOSS website for 2024 conference updates; student scholarship information; Executive Board contact information; and member resources, including IOSS meeting minutes and materials from conference presentations.

<https://internal.dmacc.edu/ioss>

IOSS Facebook:




Like us on Facebook to receive updates on IOSS and our annual conference!

https://www.facebook.com/iowaoss/?ref=py_c

The NOSS website:

<https://thenoss.org/>

Mark your calendar for NOSS 2025!



*Jazzing Up
Student Success*
NOLA
NOSS 2025 CONFERENCE

49th Annual Conference
February 19-22, 2025
Hyatt Regency
New Orleans, LA

The logo for the NOSS 2025 Conference features the text 'Jazzing Up Student Success' in a red script font, 'NOLA' in large blue letters with a red dot, and 'NOSS 2025 CONFERENCE' in green. To the right is a graphic of a yellow trumpet. Below the logo, the text '49th Annual Conference' is in bold black, followed by the dates 'February 19-22, 2025' and the location 'Hyatt Regency New Orleans, LA'.