

NOSS 2023 Conference Reflections

Examining the Impact of AI



As a nationwide network of practitioners, NOSS provides insights and discussions related to current trends and issues in education. This dynamic represents one of the valued benefits of participating in IOSS

and NOSS. At this year's NOSS conference in Las Vegas, several sessions examined the growing presence of artificial intelligence in the educational space. While most instructors remain duly concerned about the issues related to academic integrity and the rapid changes related to the technology, presenters also noted the opportunities for educators to improve their own teaching experiences and to help students navigate new technological challenges.

Some presenters recognized the seemingly overwhelming difficulty of monitoring the use of AI systems in student work. A session presented by faculty from National St. Louis University reviewed several tools beyond ChatGPT and other most well known models. Even though there are applications to check originality and plagiarism, AI detectors remain unreliable and may identify writing which uses tools such as Grammarly as AI-generated, further complicating the process of grading and judging original work. The presenters noted that instructors may need to adapt their approaches and even refocus the direction of their

In this edition

- [NOSS 2023 Conference Reflections](#)
- [Library Database Resources](#)
- [NOSS Awards to WITCC](#)
- [IOSS Student Scholarship](#)
- [Outstanding Service to Students Award](#)

assignments. Since it is difficult to identify AI-created work, instructors may need to reimagine their assignments as steps featuring small, formative assessments throughout a semester. An instructor then monitors and guides the student during the process, observing the creation of the assessment over time. Part of this process might even include engagement with AI tools, in which students use AI to build their products. This reworking adds greater focus on understanding the topic, brainstorming, and the critical thinking involved with generating questions and evaluating results when using an AI tool. Instructors might even use AI-generated text for peer review exercises or as examples students may analyze and critique.

In another session, Laura Foster from Collin College in Texas recognized the challenges related to AI but also reminded attendees that AI provides useful tools for instructors. As with the National St. Louis presenters, Forster recognized the importance of monitored steps in assessments to maintain academic integrity, including the application of more personal engagement through individual

conferences. However, Foster demonstrated how AI may also become a useful tool for instructor efficiency. As this session presented, an instructor may create quizzes, outlines, lesson plans, and summaries quickly and easily by simply entering parameters and goals into an AI model. For students struggling with reading or English as a second language, an instructor may enter complicated text into an AI tool and rapidly reconstruct the material in a more suitable and accessible reading level. Although it requires attentiveness to check for accuracy, this session exhibited the potential value these tools provide instructors in a classroom environment offering quick efficiency and rapid adaptability.

Clearly, instructors remain concerned and interested in this topic, seeking basic information on the tools and tactics to manage the use of the technology. During the conference, an open roundtable discussion on the topic attracted a crowd of participants on two separate days. Practitioners in higher education must not only determine how to manage assessments and identify AI-assisted work, but they must also adapt to the varied and constantly changing technology. These circumstances exhibit the value of a supportive and informed network such as the NOSS membership, helping colleagues address current issues, gain valuable knowledge, share strategies, and use new tools to support students as they grow and succeed in a changing world. As presenters noted, instructors must not only grapple with this new technology, but institutions must also guide students to work with this technology effectively, ethically, and competently as they leave our classrooms and enter an evolving work environment.

*Dan Nelson, Instructor, Developmental Education and Academic Support, DMACC
IOSS President 2023-2024*

NOSS Advising & Counseling Network Meeting



One of my favorite things about NOSS is the networks that members can be involved in. Admittedly, this is something I did not take advantage of until somewhat recently. For those of you who are not familiar, NOSS networks allow members to meet on regular basis (usually monthly or quarterly). These virtual meetings provide attendees with the platform for open discussion about various topics, and the chance to hear from colleagues around the nation regarding best practices or strategies for student success. A comprehensive list of NOSS networks can be found here: <https://thenoss.org/Networks>.

One network I am involved with is the Advising and Counseling Network. As the new lead for our advising restructure at Iowa Lakes Community College, this network, along with NACADA, has been incredibly beneficial for me. Meeting virtually with this group is an excellent option, but many of us were also able to connect in person at the NOSS conference this past February in Las Vegas, NV. The mission of this network is to provide holistic development of students through intentional interactions, advising, and advocacy while also supporting faculty and administrators.

Although colleges all seem to have their own advising structure, attendees of this meeting were able to talk about best practices, but we also discussed advising initiatives that were not as successful in the past. One of the key takeaways, which most of us are fully aware of, is how important relationship building is for both retention and success. Academic advisors, whether this be a faculty advisor or a professional advisor, play a vital role in this process as they are typically the first, and

main, point of contact for a student. This “front door” experience can often set the stage for a student, and their family, and may make or break whether the student continues enrollment at an institution.

One best practice that is not as common at all institutions, especially two-year colleges, is maintaining the same academic advisor from initial enrollment to degree completion. This strategy was discussed because many advisors present at the meeting feel this is one of the biggest challenges for them. Based on their experiences, students who are given a new advisor after their freshman year continue to seek the assistance of their “original” advisor. This doubles the load for the advisor, who is inclined to help the student, rather than send them away. In turn, this process, which was created with good intentions, often confuses the student, and overloads the advisor. Discussion of this issue, unsurprisingly, led the conversation to the topic of advisor burnout. It is crucial that these individuals, but really everyone, schedule time for themselves throughout the day. This can be as simple as blocking your calendar for a 30- to 45-minute lunch or creating a meeting each day that only you attend – think of it as a mental health break!

Although no educational counselors were present for this in-person meeting, another topic discussed was closely related to this profession. In recent years, several colleges have hired success or achievement coaches, who are either part of the advising team or part of the overall retention and success team. A handful of success coaches were present at this network meeting. Each shared their experience and described how they assisted students from day to day. Success coaches typically monitor student progress, assist with general questions related to college or navigating classes, and help students connect with other academic or social resources. Several other conversations ensued, both during the meeting and afterward, related to advising,

counseling, and other student success approaches. The benefits of connecting with individuals from this network, and from IOSS and NOSS in general, are endless. I highly recommend each of you consider joining one of these in the future.

*Molly Struve, Director of Academic Success,
ILCC
IOSS Past President, IOSS Secretary 2023-2024*

Thinking Holistically: NOSS and Education at All Levels and for All Education Professionals



As our parent organization NOSS has shifted beyond a primarily academic focus and beyond just developmental education, we have seen a broader range of education roles and education institutions in attendance at the national conference. During the 48th Annual NOSS Conference, I attended numerous outstanding sessions, but I have chosen to briefly share more about two of them, which were also the first two sessions I attended at the conference. I chose these two sessions because I was able to follow up with the presenters for interviews for a course in an EdD program, but the combination of the sessions and information I gleaned from the interviews is relevant for all of us.

The first session was “Developing a Culture of Care: A Little Bit of Caring Goes a Long Way” by Dr Arlene Callwood and Chrystelle Voigt. This session was really derived from [Dr. Callwood's dissertation](#). It is worth emphasizing that Dr. Callwood's dissertation as well as the presentation incorporated an understanding of neuroscience and the capacity for positive emotional experiences to correlate with positive learning outcomes; thus, as one might

assume, negative emotional experiences correlate with negative learning outcomes. Her dissertation focused on teachers, but the presentation extended the culture of caring to all roles in the education system.

I greatly appreciated the acknowledgment of emotional well-being, and the role anyone working in the education system can play in facilitating a positive learning effect. While Dr. Callwood is primarily an educator at Medgar Evers College (MEC), which is part of the City University of New York system, the presentation applied to developing a culture of care across the education system and across roles in the system. It is worth noting that the role of student support professionals beyond faculty is further explored in sessions across the NOSS conference. I attended a number of sessions that focused mostly on student supports outside the classroom as well.

The second session was "Teaching Critical Thinking: How to Avoid Bias & Logical Fallacies in the Classroom" by Dan Berkenkemper. The title of the presentation is a bit misleading. Mr. Berkenkemper did include concrete examples of how to teach students to be better consumers of information as well as to encourage students to reflect on their own biases, but the presentation went much further. It also incorporated the role that artificial intelligence was playing in the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation in society overall. It was at least, in part, a commentary on contemporary culture, especially in critical information spaces where politics intersects with the consumption and proliferation of the information.

I found the session useful for diversity courses I teach, but the session was practical for everyday interactions with coworkers, for example. For me, it was also affirming because on more than one occasion I have had coworkers at my institution or even colleagues at a conference make claims that I

find suspect; even though I politely ask for a source when people make claims I find suspect, their reactions can be almost hostile in today's sociopolitical environment. Mr. Berkenkemper helped remind us all of the times we are in because he shared similar experiences at his institution, Liberty University (LU).

A significant portion of my work is in the classroom, so the sessions I attend have that general leaning. However, I think the sample of the first two sessions I attended provide a sense of the breadth of representation by institutions that NOSS now experiences. MEC and LU both award degrees up to graduate level, yet both institutions are dealing with learners with needs well beyond those of traditional postsecondary student populations. During my interviews with the presenters, they described the same challenges that I experience working with students at a community college. I have asserted in the past and continue to assert that higher education is still in its early stages in modern society, with a shift from an elitist system to a normative expectation. Thus, education practitioners, essentially all members of NOSS whether in the classroom or otherwise providing student supports, must continue to share best practices and insights gained through experience across all levels of the education system.

*Mike Cagley, Instructional Specialist, Transitional Education, WITCC
IOSS Treasurer*

Librarian *Shhh*elf of Treasures: AI Ed Tech Tools in Review



Artificial Intelligence is currently consuming our thoughts and teaching approaches. The following AI ed tech is recommended from sessions IOSS President Dan

Nelson attended at the National NOSS Conference and resources Executive Director of the Iowa Community College Online Consortium (ICCO) Theresa Umscheid showcased at a recent ILCC faculty training. I hope you find several practical free and fee-based applications that can seamlessly be embedded into your program!

1. GPT Minus 1 Writing

Assistance www.gptminus1.com

Randomly replaces words with synonyms in text. Simply paste your text in the box and it will give results very quickly.

2. Midjourney Image Creation &

Editing - www.midjourney.com/home

Creates high quality images from text prompts, producing 4 versions per prompt. Midjourney requires *Discord* to create images, which has a large repository of AI generated images. The free trial period allows creation of 20 images at no charge. There are various plans for monthly or yearly subscriptions.

3. Runway AI Video/Animation Creation & Editing

runwayml.com

Runway AI offers a wide range of video editing features. It is an *advanced* AI text-to-video generator allowing the user to crop, resize, add music, voiceovers, and sound

effects. Adjust colors and automatically change backgrounds. Generate videos from text prompts. Enjoy 30 other “Magic” tools with help of tutorials and samples. A little slow to generate product but good results. Runway’s free model offers 125 credits per day. Each image generation uses 5 credits. Paid plan starts at \$15/month for 625 credits.

4. Soundraw Music/Voice Creation & Editing - soundraw.io/

Very easy to create music from a large variety of genres, moods, tempo, and instruments. Good for background music.

Free plan allows unlimited songs and does not expire. Upgrade to the paid plan with more features for \$16/month and Artist plan for \$29.99/month.

Conclusion

Check out these recommended AI ed tech tools to enhance student engagement and learning experiences!

*Google's AI Gemini paused as of February 22nd. [Washington Post article](#) explaining the cause:

[Google takes down Gemini AI image generator. Here's what you need to know.](#)

Critics said the Google’s Gemini image generator created images of a woman pope and Black founding father.

www.washingtonpost.com

*Kathrine Rogers, Librarian, ILCC
IOSS Community College Representative*

NOSS 2024 Awards for WITCC

Congratulations to our colleagues at Western Iowa Tech Community College for two awards received at the recent conference. The Comet Learning Center was designated a Program of Promise, and Dr. Juline Albert, newly retired from WITCC, won the Administrator or Public Servant for Outstanding Support to Student Success Award. Thanks to Bea Houston for sharing the award-winning applications, which should serve as an inspiration to IOSS members from other institutions to celebrate their successes with NOSS recognition.

Program of Promise



Western Iowa Tech Community College, under a 5-year Title III grant, brought ALEKS to campus as a tool to aid student preparation for math courses. At the close of the grant in

2019, the Comet Learning Center (CLC) took this aspect on and enhanced the use of ALEKS to support student learning and eliminate costs to the students.

The developmental classes in math had become a barrier and had many students stuck in a loop they couldn't seem to overcome. They couldn't make it into their program work without the math and couldn't get into the math needed until they passed the developmental work. This caused many to drop out and ultimately default on their student loans as they had nothing to show for the classes they had taken.

The Comet Learning Center proposed that students who take the ALEKS would work with instructional specialists in the CLC to gain the necessary skills to test into their gateway courses in the ALEKS

Placement, Preparation and Learning (PPL) program. This would be in and around the student's other coursework at no fee. If the student desired to work at a designated time and days with the specialist, it would be arranged. If the student chose to work on the topics at home, he/she is introduced to the program and given workbook pages to record their work with a target to reach before returning to retest.

The CLC keeps a spreadsheet of all students working in the program with notes as to progress, problems, and targets. This allows multiple people to check on student progress and keep them progressing without having to wait on a specific person to approve their testing. Students need a test slip to turn into the testing center before they are allowed to take an ALEKS test or retest. The initial slips can be from anyone in the CLC or from their advisor. Any retest slip needs to come from the CLC and carry the signature of CLC personnel. Students who do not test well are given encouragement and direction on overcoming the anxiety of "testing". If they are showing a great work ethic and seeking help from CLC personnel when problems arise, they can be granted a waiver of the cut scores for classes (within reason) with the understanding that during the semester in the gateway course they will seek help in the CLC at the first sign of difficulty to stay on track. These are rare occurrences; but do happen.

In the years since the program's inception, we have seen the successful completion of gateway math courses. Here are the tables for the 2022 to current ALEKS tested students who worked in the PPL to enroll in the gateway course. *[Editor's note: Data tables in this application have been omitted from the newsletter but are available to interested readers.]* The courses represented by name are: MAT 102 Intermediate Algebra; MAT 111 Math for Liberal Arts; MAT 117 Math for Elementary Teachers; MAT 121 College Algebra; MAT 129 Pre-calculus;

MAT 156/157 Statistics I & II; MAT 201 Applied Calculus; MAT 211 Calculus I; MAT 217 Calculus II; MAT 772 Applied Math (non-transfer course for our Career and Technical students). MAT 772 does not require ALEKS testing for enrollment, but some students who are insecure in their math abilities opt to do so anyway.

As indicated in the numbers above, the majority of students in the most common courses for program completion on our campus (MAT 111, MAT 121, and MAT 156) the rates are 80% or better for the students we are seeing in the CLC. MAT 102 can be deceptive in that the majority of students need a higher level of math than this course, but think they need to be in a classroom learning instead of working with us in the CLC. They opt to take MAT 102 and follow their progress in that course to their next level. Many do not find success in that pathway, but follow it against our recommendation.

“Insanity is doing the same thing, over and over again, but expecting different results.” – Albert Einstein

In summary, our ALEKS placement program does the following things for students:

- Attempts to tap into noncognitive skills, especially motivation and/or perseverance, to limit risk (especially financial risk) for students needing math remediation.
- Provides remote and face-to-face support for students who want it or need it, both during remediation and during college credit courses.
- Includes access to college credit courses for student who cannot reach the necessary ALEKS score but who otherwise demonstrate work ethic and motivation for completion, learning, and perseverance.

For these reasons, we feel the Western Iowa Tech Community College ALEKS placement program deserves to be recognized as a Program of Promise.

Administrator or Public Servant for Outstanding Support to Student Success Award

The Western Iowa Tech Community College's Comet Learning Center would like to nominate Dr. Juline Albert, as an Administrator for Outstanding Support to Student Success. She has been a staunch supporter of the Comet Learning Center since the grant's inception (it was expanded as part of a Title III 5-year grant a few years back).

When the grant ended, she supported keeping all changes made in place and allowing us to expand on the services we were already offering. Under her direction, we have implemented an after-school (middle school and high school) open tutoring time at the campus; we have created and held ACT prep sessions for any student wanting to join; and we have added snacks, coffee, tea, water, and hot chocolate to the area to help draw students in.

With Dr. Albert's approval our after-school coaching, as we call it, is offered to any middle or high school student who would like to work with our coaches to improve their understanding of concepts in their classes. They are required to sign a FERPA release that allows us to speak with their parents and anyone from their school who might wish to discuss what they are covering or learning while on our campus. We don't promise to have someone for every course they need help in but offer any of the coaches working in the evening that may be able to assist them. We have a printed schedule including subjects, coach names, and availability for them to utilize in planning their time.

We took the idea for ACT prep classes to Dr. Albert and our ACT prep sessions began. We started pre-COVID and they were being regularly attended on evenings and weekends, with coaches covering the topics on the test and offering test-taking strategies. We coordinated the sessions to wrap up either the week before the test date or a couple of nights prior to the test date for each date offered (except for the September date). We offered the sessions via Zoom during the pandemic and are now back to face-to-face sessions. Many students have attended and sent us thank-you notes following their tests. We even had one student tell us, "I took a paid ACT prep session and was disappointed; my score did not improve. I came and attended your free sessions; and my score went up and I feel much better about the time spent."

Students and other colleagues on campus know that the Comet Learning Center, or CLC as it is commonly referred to, is the place to go for a quick cookie or piece of candy and a bottle of water. Also there is always hot water ready for them to mix up their coffee, tea or hot chocolate. Campus still has a coffee spot in the main entrance and our offering does not take away from their sales. They do a booming business, as our "treats" are mainly consumed by students on strict budgets, or when the coffee spot is closed. Of course, it is open to anyone and everyone; we don't ask, we just keep it ready.

Our area has expanded services to include helping students set up their myWIT accounts, get into Canvas, and set-up their Cengage Unlimited accounts (we offer all students a Cengage Unlimited subscription as part of their student fees). Most of our courses use Cengage Unlimited textbooks or utilize open educational resources, OER, to save students money. These are handled by the staff of the CLC each semester and students know if they have questions about anything academic (or anything else for that matter) they can come to us

and we will help them navigate, find solutions, or locate the right person on campus to help them.

The college added athletics to campus this fall and with it, we expanded our hours to allow the athletes to have dedicated study hours in the CLC with our coaches. The center is open to everyone during this time, but the athletes are required to have their dedicated study time, per their coaches, to remain eligible to participate.

Dr. Albert has served on the Sioux City School Board and has made her contribution to the education of the youth in the area prior to reaching us. When she sees opportunities to collaborate with the local district or surrounding areas, she encourages us to look and see what connections or collaborations we can build with them.

Dr. Albert is retiring in January and will be greatly missed, but she has built a legacy in our department that we feel will live on at WIT long after she has moved on to her next adventure. It is for these reasons that we nominate her for this award. As she always says, "If it is what is good for the community and our students, it is the right thing to do!" We feel this applies to her efforts in this endeavor.

Bea Houston, Director, WITCC Transitional Education, IOSS President-Elect

Applications Open *One More Month* for 2024 IOSS Student Scholarship

The Iowa Organization for Student Success (IOSS) Executive Board is accepting applications for a student who has excelled in developmental coursework. Please take time before the spring term ends 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>

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.

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!

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

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

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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!



49th Annual Conference

February 19-22, 2025
Hyatt Regency
New Orleans, LA