

JIPE Congratulates the 2023 State Of The Art Conference Award Recipients!



**The George Jesien National Leadership Award
Dr. Clare Papay, Think College**

Dr. Clare Papay is Senior Research Associate/Project Manager at Think College at the Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston, where she conducts research on inclusive higher education for students with intellectual disability. Clare is the Evaluation Coordinator for the National Coordinating Center for the TPSID model demonstration program funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE). She is also the co-Principal Investigator for the IES-funded project, "Moving Transition Forward: Exploration of College-based and Conventional Transition Practices for Students with Intellectual Disability and Autism" and co-Principal Investigator for the OPE-funded project, "Think College Inclusive Higher Education Network: A Technical Assistance and Dissemination Center." Clare serves as co-editor for the Journal of Inclusive Postsecondary Education (JIPE).

**Institute of Higher Education Leadership Award
Dr. Chrisann Schiro-Geist, University of Memphis Institute on Disability**

Dr. Chrisann Schiro-Geist is an accomplished professional who has dedicated her life to advancing the knowledge and practice of rehabilitation counseling. Her exceptional leadership abilities are evident in her role as the director of the University of Memphis Institute on Disability (UMID) since its inception in 2007. Before her academic career began, Chrisann was a psychologist educator with seven community-based programs for young adults with IDD in Illinois since coming to Tennessee. Chrisann has managed the TigerLife program at the University of Memphis Institute on Disability which has successfully graduated 307 young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the last decade. TigerLife, which is an inclusive higher education program, holds a competitive integrated employment rate of over 70%. Chrisann has been involved with specialized accreditation in rehabilitation, counseling, rehabilitation science, and the development of inclusive higher education, accreditation standards and practices as part of the MCC work group.

**Laura Lee Leadership Award
Jason Rogers, Special Olympics**

As Coordinator of Workplace Readiness and Inclusion, Jason Rogers works with companies to help them become more inclusive towards people with intellectual disabilities (ID). Jason believes that people with ID have great things to contribute to companies and is passionate about helping companies realize that. Jason also works at The Learning Center at Chattanooga Christian School as a paraprofessional where he supports middle and high school students with ID as they practice workplace readiness skills. Jason holds a Certificate of Career Exploration from Lipscomb University's IDEAL Program, where he was one of the first of two undergraduate students with ID to live independently in the student dorms. Jason has a passion for life and for helping persons with ID reach their full potential and independence.

**State Level Leadership Award
Jonathan Lidgus, University of Missouri - St. Louis**

Jonathan has been a member of the University of Missouri - St. Louis community since 2002. He began his career at UMSL as a graduate student in the Office of Student Life and was brought on full time in 2005. Two years later, he joined the Office of Residential Life where he became its Director. From there, Jonathan worked at UMSL Succeed for five years until he was promoted to Program Director in August 2017. He holds a M. Ed. in Counseling and is working toward a doctorate in Education. His academic research interests are in the area of intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) in higher education. Jonathan's role is instrumental in the planning and establishment of the Succeed Program at UMSL and its subsequent transition to the Office of Inclusive Postsecondary Education.

**Megan Cartier Early Career Scholar Award
Dr. Sascha Reed, George Mason University**

Dr. Alexandra "Sascha" Reed is the Academic Coordinator of the Mason LIFE Program at George Mason University and adjunct professor for the Division of Special Education and Disability Research. Sascha's research interests include inclusion, intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), inclusive postsecondary education and community involvement, and participatory inquiry. Her research goals include developing studies



The State of the Art Conference (SOTA) provides opportunities for colleges, universities, researchers, program staff, parents, and self-advocates to learn about the current state of research and practice in the field of inclusive postsecondary/higher education, and to network with each other. Conference speakers include faculty and staff from postsecondary education initiatives, parents, self-advocates, and other experts—sharing effective practices and leading group discussions.

The parallel Student Leadership Conference brings current and prospective college students into the conversation with opportunities to learn useful tools for the transition to college life, expand their skills as student advocates and leaders, and meet peers from across the country.

**Join Us in Chapel Hill, North Carolina
October 29-30, 2024**

<https://taishoffcenter.syr.edu/sota/>