



SOLAR2025

Summit for Online
Leadership and Administration

Powered by UPCEA

JULY 22–24, 2025
Portland, Oregon
#UPCEASOLAR



The LMS for easier teaching and better learning

Empower instructors with AI Design Assistant and other time-saving innovation

Get key actionable insights that guide you to increase student success

Deliver personalized, flexible experiences for all learners

“I never thought I would say this, but our only challenge now with our LMS is keeping pace with all the new features being released and making sure faculty can integrate them into their courses!”

—Rick Koch, Dean, Bellevue University



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WELCOME TO PORTLAND!

We are delighted to welcome you to the 2025 Summit for Online Leadership and Administration (SOLAR) conference in Portland, Oregon. As co-chairs for this event, we are honored to bring together leaders, practitioners, and innovators who are shaping the future of digital learning and strategic leadership in higher education.

This week's conference is focusing on the core themes of digital transformation, innovation, and strategic leadership. Whether you are a senior leader, an emerging professional, or an instructional/learning designer in—or aspiring to a leadership role—SOLAR offers a unique opportunity to explore strategies and best practices that are crucial to navigating the dynamic landscape of online education.

The conference's thoughtfully curated program serves a diverse audience through engaging keynotes, workshops, discussions, and networking opportunities. We will delve into key themes such as leadership strategy, credential innovation, program design, emerging policy trends, and serving specialized learner populations. SOLAR 2025 will deliver actionable strategies and a deeper understanding of the complexities faced by our community of digital education leaders.

We encourage you to actively engage in the conversations, share your experiences, and contribute to the collective expertise that defines SOLAR this week. Your perspectives are invaluable as we continue to build a vibrant community of leaders dedicated to advancing excellence and innovation in online education.

We're glad you're joining us for a conference that will inspire, inform, and propel us forward as we work together to shape the future of online education.

Warm regards,

Sunay Palsole

Texas A&M University
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Engineering Remote Education
SOLAR 2025 Advisory Committee Co-Chair

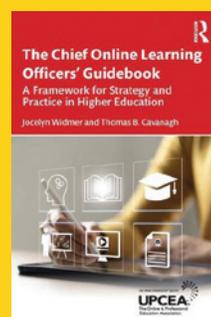
Susan Seal

Mississippi State University
Dean, College of Professional and Continuing Studies
SOLAR 2025 Advisory Committee Co-Chair

How to Use this Program

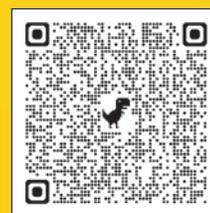
For the most robust experience, be sure to reference this program alongside the conference app and/or conference website on your phone, tablet, or laptop for full session descriptions, information about our conference exhibitors, and more. The conference website can be found at upcea.edu/solar25.

To help you find the sessions that are right for you, conference sessions are tagged with topic areas. Session rooms can fill up, so make a note of a few sessions you're interested in attending for each session block in the event that your first choice session is full.



The Chief Online Learning Officers' Guidebook

If you purchased *The Chief Online Learning Officers' Guidebook: A Framework for Strategy and Practice in Higher Education* (Widmer & Cavanagh, 2025) as part of your SOLAR registration, please visit the UPCEA Registration Desk to pick up your copy. Please note that all Chief Online Learning Officers (COLOs) attending the COLO Convening will receive their copy of the book at the Convening on July 22.



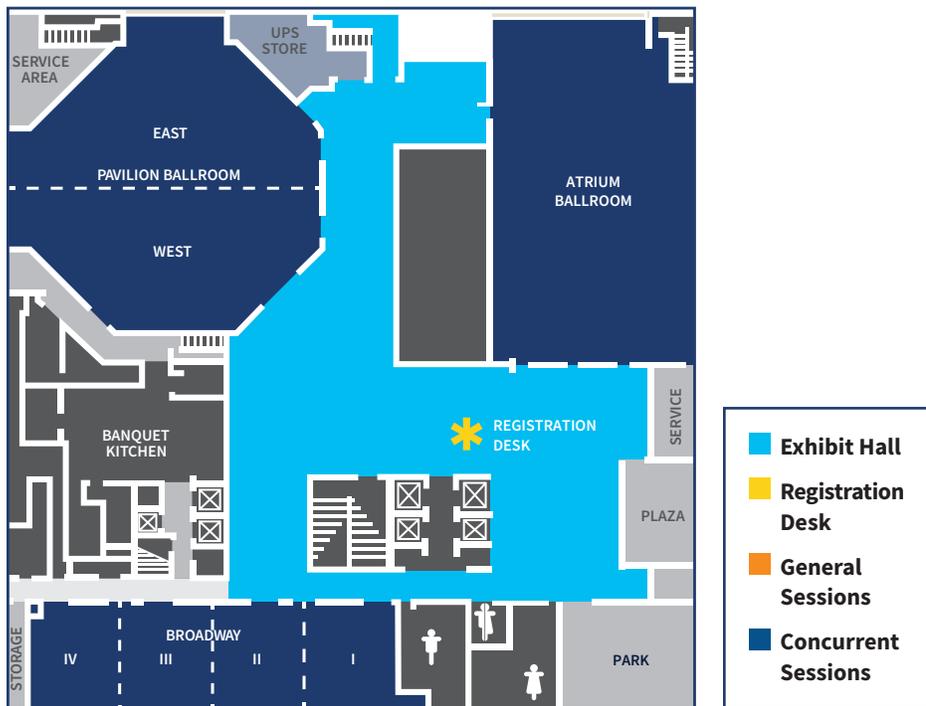
Scan QR code to download the conference app

This essential resource offers practical insights and strategies for leaders navigating the evolving landscape of online learning. Missed your chance to pre-order? Follow the QR code to purchase directly from the publisher's website. SOLAR25 attendees receive a special 25% discount on the book using discount code COLO25.



VENUE FLOORPLAN

Plaza Level



UPCEA Registration Desk Hours

Tuesday, July 22
8:00 AM–5:30 PM

Wednesday, July 23
7:00 AM–5:00 PM

Thursday, July 24
7:00 AM–11:00 AM

Exhibit Hall Hours

Tuesday, July 22
2:30 PM–6:30 PM

Wednesday, July 23
7:00 AM–5:00 PM

Thursday, July 24
7:00 AM–11:00 AM

Ballroom Level



WiFi

Get online at the conference with free wireless internet in all meeting and session rooms, as well as the conference exhibitor area.

Network: Hilton Meeting Room
Password: upcea25

Social Media

Continue the conversation online with fellow attendees and speakers during and between sessions Use **#UPCEASOLAR** and **#SOLAR25** online to stay in touch!



From Theory to Practice: Integrating AI-Driven Scenarios

WEBINAR

August 12, 2025 | 2:00 - 3:00 PM ET

Join us for a one-hour webinar as faculty from NYU Steinhardt's Teacher Residency Program and experts from Noodle explore how AI-powered, scenario-based learning bridges the gap between theory and practice—helping learners build skills, gain confidence, and prepare for real-world challenges.



Scan the QR code to register.

CONFERENCE INFORMATION + COLO CREDENTIAL

Conference App

Create your own schedule, connect with your fellow attendees, and stay up-to-date with announcements and schedule changes with the 2025 SOLAR app.

Download Guidebook in the Apple App Store or Google Play, visit [guidebook.com](https://www.guidebook.com), or scan the QR code below.

After the app downloads, open it. Then search for and select “2025 UPCEA SOLAR—Portland, OR.”



Scan QR code
to download the
conference app

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Health and Safety

UPCEA recommends for those that choose to do so, attendees be up to date on their vaccinations, and wear a properly fitting face mask during UPCEA events at all public indoor spaces. Conference attendees are reminded to be respectful of individual choices made by fellow attendees, UPCEA staff, and others at the conference.

UPCEA is not liable and accepts no responsibility for any accidents, injuries, or losses pursuant to imbibing alcoholic beverages or for any other reason on or off premises at the Annual Conference.

Event-Based Credential Pilot: Advancing COLO Competencies at SOLAR

At this year’s SOLAR conference, UPCEA is launching a pioneering event-based credential pilot designed specifically for current and aspiring Chief Online Learning Officers (COLOs). Anchored in UPCEA’s well-established Professional, Continuing, and Online (PCO) Competency Framework (upcea.edu/competencies), this pilot initiative integrates select concurrent sessions with a post-event learning assessment to deliver a dynamic and meaningful professional development experience. More than just a participation badge, this credential aims to demonstrate real learning through engagement, reflection, and peer-to-peer knowledge exchange.

This two-part experience begins with specially selected conference sessions that align with targeted UPCEA competencies. Selected sessions are labeled “**COLO Credential**” and feature the most timely and valued content in the field of online learning. Participating speakers have shaped their content to reinforce these competencies during and post-event. Rather than awarding a badge for passive participation, the pilot includes a co-created learning assessment—including discussion to reflection—to ensure credentialed individuals demonstrate knowledge integration. This initiative embodies UPCEA’s commitment to high-quality professional learning and elevates the SOLAR conference as a hub for both innovation and rigor in credentialing, a model UPCEA members embrace in their daily work.

July 22, 3:00 PM–4:00 PM

Balancing Governance and Agility: Leading Distinctive Online Programs in a Crowded Market

Location: Pavilion East

 **COLO Credential**

Strategic Planning & Governance

As online education grows rapidly amid increasing market congestion, institutions must strike a careful balance between academic governance, innovation, and differentiation. This session explores how universities can leverage shared governance structures to support responsive, sustainable online programs—without compromising academic integrity or agility.

Blending institutional case studies and cultural insights, presenters will examine:

- How to navigate shared governance and academic collaboration across campuses and units.
- Strategies for aligning online program development with faculty senates, accreditation expectations, and state agency requirements.
- The role of cultural awareness, constituent understanding, and distinctiveness in positioning online programs for long-term success.
- How themes from pop culture—like the satirical lens of Portlandia—can inform how we market, design, and lead programs that resonate with today's learners.

Attendees will gain insights into creating online offerings that are academically sound, culturally relevant, and competitively positioned in an increasingly crowded digital education landscape.

- **Bettyjo Bouchey**, *University of Vermont*
- **Tom Cavanaugh**, *University of Central Florida*
- **Luke Dowden**, *Alamo Community Colleges District*
- **Chris Foley**, *Indiana University*
- **Moderator: Daria LaTorre**, *Duquesne University*

July 23, 1:00 PM–2:00 PM

Smart Starts and Strategic Signals: Launching and Marketing Online Programs in a Shifting Consumer Landscape

Location: Pavilion West

 **COLO Credential**

Marketing & Enrollment

In today's competitive and value-conscious education market, launching a new online program isn't just about academic merit—it's about aligning institutional capacity, market demand, and the evolving expectations of prospective students. This session explores how to make high-impact program launch decisions, across a range of institution types, and how to market those programs effectively.

Panelists will share proven strategies for:

- Using data-informed tools, like Program Viability Analysis, Industry Insight Panels, and Financial Modeling to guide program selection and cross-campus alignment.
- Navigating institutional governance and securing leadership buy-in for sustainable portfolio growth.
- Understanding and responding to shifts in consumer mindset, including skepticism about ROI and the changing expectations of online learners.
- Structuring marketing efforts to maximize impact with limited resources.

Whether you're determining what to launch—or how to market what you've launched—this session will offer actionable insights for building online portfolios that are both mission-aligned and market-smart.

- **Radhika Krishnadas**, *Louisiana State University*
- **Renee Renegar**, *Louisiana State University*
- **Stephanie Platteter**, *University of Minnesota*
- **Erica Crawford**, *Miami University*
- **Stacy Snow**, *Kennedy and Company*
- **Moderator: Amy Heitzman**, *UPCEA*

July 23, 2:15 PM–3:15 PM

Building and Sustaining Online Success: Financial Models and Real-World Strategies

Location: Atrium Ballroom

 **COLO Credential**

Financial Models & Compliance

This interactive session blends theory and practice to equip participants with the skills to build effective financial models and learn from successful real-world case studies. Participants will first engage in a guided workshop to identify funding streams, outflows, incentives and models relevant to their institutions using the frameworks developed at Texas A&M and The University of Texas at El Paso. Then, Oregon State University will present their innovative budget model, discussing its impact on online program growth and sharing strategies for advocating for online growth incentives within evolving university budget frameworks. Participants will conclude with a collaborative discussion to share their own insights and develop actionable plans for their institutions.

- **Sunay Palsole**, *Texas A&M University*
- **Beth Brunk**, *University of Texas at El Paso*
- **Jessica DuPont**, *Oregon State University Ecampus*
- **Moderator: Jamal Gay**, *Noodle*

July 24, 9:30 AM–10:30 AM

Beyond the Org Chart: Sustaining Impact Across Marketing and Enrollment Services

Location: Broadway II

 **COLO Credential**

Marketing & Enrollment

Learn how Oregon State University Ecampus built and evolved its digital-first marketing and enrollment services collaboration. Explore promising practices that span unified structures and cross-unit partnerships. Leave with actionable ideas to align teams, break silos, and support enrollment success.

- **Ali Duerfeldt**, *Oregon State University Ecampus*
- **Kat Ambrose**, *Oregon State University Ecampus*
- **Moderator: Melissa Peraino**, *UPCEA*

SCHEDULE

View full session details in the Conference App or at upcea.edu/solar25.

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Tuesday, July 22

8:00 AM–5:30 PM

Registration Open

Location: Plaza Registration

9:00 AM–11:00 AM

C-COLO Convening The Future of Your Team in Uncertain Times: Building Your Team, Professional Competencies, and Succession Planning (Attendance limited to COLOs and Institutional Representatives; Pre-registration required)

Location: Pavilion East

- **Carmin Chan**, Northern Arizona University
- **Veronica Donahue**, Johns Hopkins University
- **Julie Thalman**, University of Cincinnati
- **Jocelyn Widmer**, Los Alamos National Laboratory
- **Minh Virsak**, Santa Clara University

Sponsored by



11:00 AM–1:00 PM

Lunch on your own

There are many options for lunch within walking distance of the Hilton Portland Downtown, including:

- HopCity Tavern (inside the Hilton Portland Downtown)
- Caiman Cafe (120 SW Jefferson Street)
- CRAFTpdx (320 SW Harvey Milk Street)
- DarSalam Restaurant (320 SW Alder Street)
- El Cantarito Restaurant & Bar (735 SW 1st Avenue)
- Farmhouse Kitchen Thai Cuisine | Pearl District (121 NW 9th Avenue)
- Flying Elephants at Fox Tower (812 SW Park Avenue)
- Grits N' Gravy (215 SW 6th Avenue)
- Kalé (50 SW Pine Street)
- Mother's Bistro & Bar (121 SW 3rd Avenue)
- Pine Street Market (126 SW 2nd Avenue)
- SUNRICE (585 SW 10th Avenue)
- Tangier Restaurant (221 SW Pine Street)
- Xin Ding Dumpling House (71 SW 2nd Avenue)

12:30 PM–1:00 PM

Newcomer/Conference Orientation

Location: Pavilion West

Make connections with other first-time conference attendees and learn how to make the most of your time at the conference.

1:15 PM–2:30 PM

Opening General Session | Heather McGowan

Location: Grand Ballroom I



1:15 PM–1:25 PM

Remarks from UPCEA Deputy CEO and Chief Learning Officer Amy Heitzman

Remarks from UPCEA CEO Bob Hansen (pre-recorded)

Remarks from SOLAR 2025 Co-Chairs Sunay Palsole and Susan Seal

Presentation of Phillip E. Frandson Award for Literature

1:25 PM–2:30 PM

General Session: Heather McGowan



Top-ranked Futurist;
2x Bestselling Author

One of Forbes' Top Futurists, Heather E. McGowan is a sought-after future-of-work strategist, keynote speaker, and 2x bestselling author. She equips leaders and organizations to navigate relentless change by activating their most critical resource: their people. By teaching audiences to ask better questions, she enables them to adapt at the speed of possibility to Solve Tomorrow's Problems™. As Strategic Architect at Philadelphia University (now Jefferson University), Heather created an award-winning, interdisciplinary college focused on innovation. Her achievements included integrating 18 existing programs into a new core curriculum and creating an immersive design thinking-based program.

2:30 PM–6:30 PM

Exhibit Hall Open

Location: Plaza Foyer

2:30 PM–3:00 PM

Networking Break: Visit Exhibit Hall

Location: Plaza Foyer

3:00 PM–4:00 PM

CONCURRENT SESSION I

Balancing Governance and Agility: Leading Distinctive Online Programs in a Crowded Market

Location: Pavilion East

COLO Credential

Strategic Planning & Governance

- **Bettyjo Bouchey**, University of Vermont
- **Tom Cavanaugh**, University of Central Florida
- **Luke Dowden**, Alamo Community Colleges District
- **Chris Foley**, Indiana University
- **Moderator: Daria LaTorre**, Duquesne University

From Competition to Collaboration: Inside the UT/ASU Partnership

Location: Pavilion West

Partnerships & Collaboration

- **Casey Evans**, Arizona State University
- **Shay Scott**, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
- **Moderator: Ray Schroeder**, UPCEA

Signing on the Dotted Line: What OPM Contracts Reveal . . . and Conceal

Location: Atrium Ballroom

Financial Models & Compliance

- **Jeffrey Sun**, University of Louisville
- **Moderator: Julie Uranis**, UPCEA

Creating Change: Strategically Launching a University-Wide Online AI Portfolio

Location: Broadway I

Credentialing & Programs

- **Matthew Wagner**, Purdue University
- **Carrie Berger**, Purdue University

Designing and Developing the Academy: Empowering Faculty SMEs and Elevating Development with CIELO

Location: Broadway II

Design & Pedagogy

- **Robbie Jensen**, Creighton University
- **Liz Davie**, Creighton University
- **Allan Celik**, Purdue University
- **Moderator: Shiraz Sultan**, AAPC

Program Onboarding: Unlocking Opportunities for Growth and Impact

Location: Broadway III

Credentialing & Programs

- **Honor Parks**, The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth
- **Adria Battaglia**, The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth
- **Moderator: Sydney Bassett**, Auburn University

Scaling Programs for Workforce Impact: Lessons from Credit and Noncredit Approaches

Location: Broadway IV

Credentialing & Programs

- **Devin Miles**, Oregon State University Ecampus
- **Rachelle Strawther**, Gonzaga University
- **Moderator: Theresa Gilliard-Cook**, SUNY Oswego

STOP & SHARE PRESENTATIONS

Location: Grand Ballroom II

Attendees are invited to stop in, mill about, and engage in these dynamic, demonstration-type conversations hosted by presenters ready to share ideas on a hot topic, best practice, or technological innovation.

- **Moderator: Annie Taylor**, Penn State University

Integration of AI in Higher Education

- **Martin Yousef**, University Of La Verne

The Modern Learner: Creating an Engaging Enrollment Experience

- **Karina Kogan**, EducationDynamics
- **Leigh Saunders**, University of Minnesota

Built-In Accessibility: Shifting from a Reactive to Proactive Model

- **Caitlin Malone**, Indiana University
- **Carrie Hansel**, Indiana University

Collaborative Instructional Design as Faculty Development

- **Yoo Kyung Chang**, New York University

From Insights to Impact: Leveraging Campus Data for Institutional Change

- **David Herring**, University of Arizona
- **Matt Gurney**, Alchemy

Voice of the Online Learner 2025: A Toolbox for Increasing Student Engagement

- **Tekoya Boykins**, Risepoint
- **Tim Wall**, Northwest Missouri State University

Program Pathway: From Research and Grants to Development of Innovative Online and Hybrid

- **Patrick Kelley**, Oregon State University Ecampus

LMS Transition as a Reimagining of Courses

- **James Morris**, University of Michigan

The “Why” in AI: Building an Online Course Series Addressing Industry Specific AI and Ethics

- **Denise M. Evans**, Baylor University

Engaging Remote Educators: Lessons from An Online University’s Annual Faculty Experience Survey

- **Cole McFarren**, University of Arizona Global Campus

Enhancing Faculty Integration: The Role of Structured Onboarding, Peer Mentorship, and Belonging

- **Melissa Wells**, SUNY Empire State University

The Quality Assurance Implementation Landscape (QuAIL): A Strategic Systems Approach for Online Planning and Scaling

- **Bethany Simunich**, Quality Matters

SCHEDULE

View full session details in the Conference App or at upcea.edu/solar25.

4:15 PM–5:30 PM

CONCURRENT SESSION II: SPOTLIGHT SESSIONS

Distance Education Policy Update—What’s New, What’s Gone, What’s Happening?

Location: Atrium Ballroom

◆ Strategic Planning & Governance

- **Jordan DiMaggio**, UPCEA
- **Chris Murray**, Thompson Coburn LLP
- **Ricky LaFosse**, University of Michigan
- **Moderator: Vickie Cook**, University of Illinois, Springfield

Giving Credit to Non-Credit: Building a Professional, Continuing, and Non-Credit Portfolio in a Decentralized System

Location: Pavilion East

◆ Strategic Planning & Governance

- **Chris J. Foley**, Indiana University
- **Erin Edwards**, Indiana University
- **Erik Scull**, Indiana University
- **Leah Mullins**, Indiana University
- **Moderator: Carmin Chan**, Northern Arizona University

High Impact Design for Online Courses: A Learner-Focused Design Model Purpose-Built for Online Modalities

Location: Pavilion West

◆ 2025 Award Recipient

- **Bethany Simunich**, Quality Matters
- **Andrea Gregg**, Penn State University
- **Penny Ralston-Berg**, Penn State University
- **Moderator: Amy Heitzman**, UPCEA

5:30 PM

Opening Reception

Location: Plaza Foyer

Join the SOLAR exhibitors and your colleagues to discuss pressing issues in the field, and connect with friends old and new at tonight’s Opening Reception!

Wednesday, July 23

7:00 AM–5:00 PM

Registration Open

Location: Plaza Foyer

7:00 AM–5:00 PM

Exhibit Hall Open

Location: Plaza Foyer

7:00 AM–8:00 AM

Breakfast

Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

Celebrating the Life of Dr. Pam Wimbush



We invite you to scan the QR code to share your thoughts, memories, or condolences with her family.

WHERE TO FIND SESSION SLIDES

▼ On Mobile

Open the Guidebook app, and search for and open the “2025 UPCEA SOLAR—Portland, OR” guide. Use the three horizontal bar button in the top left to open the menu, and then select “Schedule”. From the schedule, select a session. Scroll down below the session description, and look for the “PDFs” section. If speakers have submitted their slides, “Session Slides” will be shown in the “PDFs” section, which you can then open and view.

▼ On Desktop

Visit guidebook.com in your browser. Click “Find a Guide” in the top right, and then search “2025 UPCEA SOLAR—Portland, OR” in the search bar that appears. Select the guide, and then click “Schedule” in the left side navigation bar. From the schedule, select a session. Scroll down below the session description, and look for the “PDFs” section. If speakers have submitted their slides, “Session Slides” will be shown in the “PDFs” section, which you can then open, view, and download/save.

8:00 AM–9:15 AM

General Session | #BOnES25:
Insights from the 2025 Benchmarking
Online Enterprises Survey

Location: Grand Ballroom I



8:00 AM–8:05 AM

Remarks from UPCEA's 2025–2026 Board
President Robert Bruce

Presentation of Ray Schroeder
Leadership Award for the Advancement
of Digital Learning

8:05 AM–9:15 AM

General Session: Insights from the 2025
Benchmarking Online Enterprises Survey



Etter

Palsole

Chan

Seal

Join UPCEA's Senior Director of Research and Consulting, Bruce Etter, for an enlightening presentation on UPCEA's 2025 Benchmarking Online Enterprises Survey. This year's survey further refines what an effective, sustainable online enterprise looks like right now and includes a special topic near and dear to everyone's hearts: Artificial Intelligence in Online Education. This session will also highlight a new per capita benchmarking variable that makes the 2025 version of the survey even more valuable to online leaders! After the data is shared, select online leaders will share their thoughts on the research and what it means for institutions like yours.

- **Presentation: Bruce Etter, UPCEA**

Panel:

- **Sunay Palsole, Texas A&M University**
- **Carmin Chan, Northern Arizona University**
- **Susan Seal, Mississippi State University**
- **Moderator: Bruce Etter, UPCEA**

9:15 AM–9:45 AM

Networking Break: Visit Exhibit Hall

Location: Plaza Foyer

9:45 AM–10:45 AM

CONCURRENT SESSION III

**The Collision of Colleagues:
Micro-credentials, Industry Partnerships,
and Virtual Environments**

Location: Atrium Ballroom

Credentialing & Programs

- **Melody Buckner, University of Arizona**
- **Jay Sampson, University of Arizona**
- **David Herring, University of Arizona**
- **Sarah Gomez, University of Arizona**
- **Moderator: Karina Kogan, EducationDynamics**

**Building a Centralized Center for Digital
Excellence: Vision, Strategy, and Action**

Location: Pavilion East

Leadership & Change Management

- **Rae Mancilla, University of Pittsburgh**
- **Natalie Baney, University of Pittsburgh**
- **Amy Morgan, University of Pittsburgh**
- **Moderator: Joe Mullen, MindEdge**

**Leadership in Turbulent Times: Building
Resilience Through Adaptive Networks**

Location: Pavilion West

Leadership & Change Management

- **Susan Seal, Mississippi State University**
- **Cheryl Murphy, University of Arkansas**
- **Moderator: Julie Thalman, University of Cincinnati**

**AI Chatbots and AI Voice Technology:
Accessible Learning Tools and
Solutions for the Modern University**

Location: Broadway I

Artificial Intelligence & Analytics

- **Scott Griffin, Georgia Institute of Technology**
- **Asim Ali, Auburn University**
- **Sydney Bassett, Auburn University**
- **Moderator: Daria LaTorre, Duquesne University**

**AI Enabled Transfer: A Win for
Learners (and You)!**

Location: Broadway II

Artificial Intelligence & Analytics

- **Karen Vignare, APLU**
- **Angi Chana, Equivalence Systems LLC**
- **Moderator: Karen Vignare, APLU**

**Rebuilding Trust and Driving Growth:
Strategic Storytelling in Online Education**

Location: Broadway III

Leadership & Change Management

- **Nancy Byron, Georgia State University**
- **Ted Rockwell, University of Colorado Boulder**
- **Moderator: Adrian Marrullier, Carnegie**

**Informed Consent in Online
Education Research, Evaluation,
and Learning Analytics**

Location: Broadway IV

Artificial Intelligence & Analytics

- **Amy Vecchione, Boise State University**
- **Naomi Aguiar, Oregon State University Ecampus**
- **Moderator: Mary Ellen Dello Stritto, Oregon State University Ecampus**

Concurrent Session block continues ▶

SCHEDULE

View full session details in the Conference App or at upcea.edu/solar25.

◀ 9:45 AM–10:45 AM

Concurrent Session III continued

ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATIONS

Location: Grand Ballroom II

In this session, attendees will have the opportunity to engage with up to two different topics during small-group, 30-minute, table-based guided discussion around a specific and timely topic, question, or issue. Roundtables are designed to provide space and time to important but particularly nuanced topics which deserve attention, and presenters will promote the sharing of thoughts, solutions, and questions among their respective table's attendees.

- **Moderator: Tina Parscal**, Colorado Community College System

Holistic Student Support in a Digital World: Balancing Technology and Human Connection

- **Steve Ast**, InsideTrack

Thriving in Transition: Change Management and Culture in Launching Online Programs

- **Annie Friedman**, University of Utah

Building the Future of Learning Design: Partnerships, Personas, and Processes

- **Gina Limperis**, Ease Learning
- **Ben Saxon**, Excelsior University

Cutting Through the Noise: Promoting Your Professional Development

- **Mae Roth**, Florida State University

Exploring the Critical Role of Networks and Social Capital in Online Student Success

- **Patty Milner**, University of Arkansas

Intersection of AI-Voice Technology and Accessibility at North America Campuses

- **Scott Griffin**, Georgia Institute of Technology
- **Robert Nay**, Recap Innovations

The Strategic Mix: In-sourcing, Outsourcing, and Unbundled Services for Peak Performance in Marketing, Enrollment Management & Student Success

- **Dean Gething**, Carnegie
- **Evan Kropp**, University of Florida
- **Brad Hamel**, Northern Michigan University

Empowering Educators as AI Builders: A Case Study in Content Transformation

- **Joana Jebesen**, LearningMate
- **Stuart Rice**, Arizona State University
- **Andrew Ko**, Kovexa

Bridging the Gap: Strategies to Unite Technology, Processes, and People for New Student Success

- **Marleigh Perez**, Oregon State University Ecampus
- **Kyle Whitehouse**, Oregon State University Ecampus

Building Bridges: Designing an Engaging and Scalable Fully-Online High School Dual Enrollment Program

- **Nico Rose**, University of Florida
- **Litza Echeverria Rubio**, University of Florida

11:00 AM–12:45 PM

Lunch and General Session | Reflecting on the Strategy and Practice of Online Learning: A Fireside Chat for COLOs and Aspiring COLOs

Location: Grand Ballroom I



11:45 AM–11:50 AM

Remarks from UPCEA Board President-Elect Asim Ali

Presentation of UPCEA Outstanding Service in Postsecondary Instructional Design Award

11:50 AM–12:45 PM

General Session | Reflecting on the Strategy and Practice of Online Learning: A Fireside Chat for COLOs and Aspiring COLOs



Widmer Cavanagh Cini Uranis

Many Chief Online Learning Officers (COLOs) are unicorns on their campus. They exist without institutional peers, and yet this unique role requires a great deal of internal and external collaboration reliant on well developed skills and competencies. Join us for a fireside chat with the co-editors of *The Chief Online Learning Officers' Guidebook* (Routledge 2025) and UPCEA's 2025 Schroeder Award Recipient. Our speakers will share perspectives on the ever-changing role of COLOs, key themes and messages from this very important new book, and insights into 'what's next' for many online leaders and their institutions.

- **Jocelyn Widmer**, Los Alamos National Laboratory
- **Tom Cavanagh**, University of Central Florida
- **Marie Cini**, University of the People
- **Moderator: Julie Uranis**, UPCEA

Strengthen your institution with the UPCEA Institutional Impact Professional Development Bundle. Build your team's skills and stretch your budget. Learn more at upcea.edu/pd-bundle-2025.

1:00 PM–2:00 PM

CONCURRENT SESSION IV

The Chief Online Learning Officers' Guidebook: A Panel Session with the Co-Authors and Expert Contributors

Location: Pavilion East

Leadership & Change Management

- **Jocelyn Widmer**, Los Alamos National Laboratory
- **Thomas Cavanagh**, University of Central Florida
- **Bethany Simunich**, Quality Matters
- **Melissa Vito**, University of Texas at San Antonio
- **Luke Dowden**, Alamo Community Colleges District
- **Deborah Keyek-Franssen**, University of Utah
- **Moderator: Jason Smith**, Anthology

Smart Starts and Strategic Signals: Launching and Marketing Online Programs in a Shifting Consumer Landscape

Location: Pavilion West

COLO Credential

Marketing & Enrollment

- **Radhika Krishnadas**, Louisiana State University
- **Renee Renegar**, Louisiana State University
- **Stephanie Platteter**, University of Minnesota
- **Erica Crawford**, Miami University
- **Stacy Snow**, Kennedy and Company
- **Moderator: Amy Heitzman**, UPCEA

Collaborate to Automate: Licensure Disclosure Compliance in Multi-System Schools

Location: Broadway I

Financial Models & Compliance

- **Sarah Cheverton**, James Madison University
- **Sarah MacDonald**, James Madison University
- **Moderator: Gregory Ketchem**, SUNY Oswego

AI Is My Co-pilot: Using GenAI to Accelerate Online Course Development

Location: Broadway II

Artificial Intelligence & Analytics

- **Nicole Westrick**, Morgan State University
- **Moderator: Sheryl Friedman**, Ziplines

Building a Competitive Online MBA Program Through Data-Driven Design and Stakeholder Engagement

Location: Broadway III

Credentialing & Programs

- **Ashley Francis**, Tulane University
- **Briana Johnson**, iDesign
- **Moderator: Teresea Madden**, The University of Texas at Arlington

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS SESSIONS

Location: Atrium Ballroom

Industry Insights is a series of curated, short, extemporaneous presentations shared in succession by UPCEA's highest level corporate partners. Each presentation will offer a quickfire introduction of an idea, challenge, solution, or product of critical import to higher education, and each partner will offer thought leadership and resources on respective themes for attendees' further consideration. Presenters will share valuable insights and expertise on current trends, emergent products, and/or original research, helping move the field of alternative credentials forward via takeaways, solutions, and innovative practices. All attendees are welcomed, regardless of positionality or organizational type.

- **Moderator: David Lawrence**, Michigan Technological University

Social Media Strategies for Modern Learners: Tailoring Engagement Across Student Populations

- **Karina Kogan**, EducationDynamics

Empowering Faculty and Enhancing Learning: AI-Driven Course Design and Student Support with Anthology's AI Design Assistant

- **Justin Louder**, Anthology

Global Education with Lifelong Learning: Expanding Access Through Online Non-Credit Content

- **Regina Law**, Noodle

Bridging the AI Readiness Gap in Higher Ed

- **Joana Jebesen**, LearningMate

Smarter Strategies for Marketing Online Programs

- **Adrian Marrullier**, Carnegie

Concurrent Session block continues ▶

Mark your calendars for UPCEA's upcoming events. Visit upcea.edu/events for more information.

Upcoming Events

September 29–October 1, Washington, DC

2025 Convergence: Credential Innovation in Higher Education

December 2–4, Boston, MA

2025 UPCEA MEMS | Marketing, Enrollment Management, and Student Success Conference

April 15–17, 2026, New Orleans, LA

2026 UPCEA Annual Conference

For more information, visit upcea.edu/events.

WEDNESDAY

SCHEDULE

View full session details in the Conference App or at upcea.edu/solar25.

◀ 1:00 PM–2:00 PM

Concurrent Session IV continued

STOP & SHARE PRESENTATIONS

Location: Grand Ballroom II

Attendees are invited to stop in, mill about, and engage in these dynamic, demonstration-type conversations hosted by presenters ready to share ideas on a hot topic, best practice, or technological innovation.

- **Moderator: Asim Ali**, Auburn University

Optimizing Student Success: Effective Preparatory Methods for Online Graduate Program

- **Alex Duncan**, Georgia Institute of Technology
- **Jeonghyun Lee**, Georgia Institute of Technology
- **Gayane Grigoryan**, Georgia Institute of Technology
- **Meryem Yilmaz Soylu**, Georgia Institute of Technology

From Stackables to Pathways

- **Martin Yousef**, University of La Verne

Digital Accessibility Foundations: Or How to Create Content for Everyone

- **Tania Heap**, University of North Texas

Transforming Education for Adult Learners: Meeting SCND Student Needs

- **Caleb Simmons**, University of Arizona
- **JT Allen**, myFootpath

There and Back Again: A Quest for Accessible Library Resources

- **Carrie Hansel**, Indiana University

The Quality Assurance Implementation Landscape (QuAIL): A Strategic Systems Approach for Online Planning and Scaling

- **Bethany Simunich**, Quality Matters

Building an Internal OPM for Online Enrollment and Student Success

- **Ginny Valentin**, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
- **Jonathan Schramm**, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

The Value of SARA: Cost Savings and Compliance

- **Emilie Crawford**, NC-SARA

Reengaging a “Mostly” Remote Workforce

- **Annie Taylor**, Penn State University
- **Stevie Rocco**, Penn State University

Strategic Benefits of Online Course Development as Faculty Professional Learning

- **Sarah Lohnes Watulak**, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

2:15 PM–3:15 PM

CONCURRENT SESSION V

Building and Sustaining Online Success: Financial Models and Real-World Strategies

Location: Atrium Ballroom

◆ COLO Credential

◆ Financial Models & Compliance

- **Sunay Palsole**, Texas A&M University
- **Beth Brunk**, University of Texas at El Paso
- **Jessica DuPont**, Oregon State University Ecampus
- **Moderator: Jamal Gay**, Noodle

Data-Informed Innovation: Transforming Education with Analytics & Adaptive Learning

Location: Pavilion East

◆ Artificial Intelligence & Analytics

- **Carrie Hansel**, Indiana University
- **Julia Spears**, Marshall University
- **Joshua Quick**, Indiana University
- **Moderator: Lisa Clark**, Anthology

Maximizing Workforce Impact and Revenue Through Strategic Online Program Development

Location: Pavilion West

◆ Credentialing & Programs

- **William Watson**, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
- **Leonta Williams**, AAPC
- **Moderator: Shiraz Sultan**, AAPC

Faculty Perceptions of uHoo Learning Analytics on Teaching Practices

Location: Broadway I

◆ Artificial Intelligence & Analytics

- **Anissa Vega**, Kennesaw State University
- **Moderator: Stevie Rocco**, Pennsylvania State University

Leveraging Coursera to Upskill Mission-Focused Staff at Los Alamos National Laboratory

Location: Broadway II

◆ Credentialing & Programs

- **Jocelyn Widmer**, Los Alamos National Laboratory
- **Moderator: Ginny Valentin**, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Responsible Access: A Strategy for Determining Internationally Located Student Eligibility for Online Programs

Location: Broadway III

◆ Financial Models & Compliance

- **Patty Milner**, University of Arkansas
- **Moderator: Marleigh Perez**, Oregon State University Ecampus

Scaling Course Revisions: A Holistic Approach to Redefining Learning Experiences

Location: Broadway IV

◆ Design & Pedagogy

- **Hala Esmail**, Louisiana State University
- **Radhika Krishnadas**, Louisiana State University
- **Moderator: Remie Verougstraete**, Lightcast

ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATIONS

Location: Grand Ballroom II

In this session, attendees will have the opportunity to engage with up to two different topics during small-group, 30-minute, table-based guided discussion around a specific and timely topic, question, or issue. Roundtables are designed to provide space and time to important but particularly nuanced topics which deserve attention, and presenters will promote the sharing of thoughts, solutions, and questions among their respective table's attendees.

- **Moderator: Julie Thalman**, University of Cincinnati

Change Management and Adult Re-entry

- **Vickie Cook**, University of Illinois, Springfield

Motivation, Meta-Analysis and Next Steps to Support Online Learners: Informing the Research Literature From a Practitioner Perspective

- **Andrew Walker**, Utah State University
- **Naomi Aguiar**, Oregon State University Ecampus

The Birth of an ID Model: Creating the Collaborative Active Learning Instructional Design (CAL-ID) Model

- **Blair Stamper**, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Improving Learner and Staff Experiences: Using Canvas' Mastery Paths to Streamline Certificate Processes

- **Alicia Harkless**, Auburn University

Intersection of AI-Voice Technology and Accessibility at North America Campuses

- **Scott Griffin**, Georgia Institute of Technology
- **Robert Nay**, Recap Innovations

Transformative Online Learning and On-Campus Students

- **Lisa Anderson**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Getting to Know the Needs of Corporate Learners

- **Brian Cook**, SkillsWave
- **Reagan Forlenzo**, University of Massachusetts Global

Collaboration, Motivation, Inspiration: Fueling Success Through Meaningful Engagement

- **Jacquelyn Cato**, Instructional Connections, LLC
- **Harriet Watkins**, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
- **Dan Keast**, The University of Texas Permian Basin

Learning Design Projects: Building Faculty Innovation in Online Spaces

- **Georgia Van Tyne**, California State University, Channel Islands
- **Stacey Beauregard**, California State University, Channel Islands

Unleashing Course Author Potential

- **Brandon Cohen**, San Diego State University

Beyond the Dashboard: How Leaders Can Turn Insights into Impact

- **Angela Gunder**, University of Arizona
- **Melissa Vito**, University of Texas San Antonio

3:15 PM-3:45 PM

Networking Break: Visit Exhibit Hall

Location: Plaza Foyer

3:45 PM-5:00 PM

CONCURRENT SESSION VI: WORKSHOPS

Workshops utilize an extended session time (75 minutes) to provide deep dives for participants to be actively, tangibly engaged in their own learning via collaboration and hands-on interaction.

Clicks, Codes, and Consequences: Understanding Student Conduct and the Law in Online Classes

Location: Broadway IV

Learners

- **Jeffrey Sun**, University of Louisville
- **Moderator: Randall Fullington**, University of Colorado Boulder

Same Strategy, Different Tactics: How Do Learning Analytic Dashboards Differ Based on the Target Audience?

Location: Pavilion East

Credentialing & Programs

- **Thomas Cavanagh**, University of Central Florida
- **Jennifer Love**, University of Michigan
- **Moderator: Elizabeth Barrie**, University of Nevada

Innovating Together: Credentialing as a Model for Inclusive and Sustainable Change

Location: Pavilion West

Credentialing & Programs

- **Trevor Cox**, University of Central Oklahoma
- **Moderator: Tawnya Means**, OES

Concurrent Session block continues ►

Learn more about UPCEA's Mentorship Program, UPlift, and our mentor/mentee opportunities at upcea.edu/uplift.

SCHEDULE

View full session details in the Conference App or at upcea.edu/solar25.

SAVE THE DATES FOR THE 2025 REGIONAL SALONS:

Thursday, August 7
New England Region

Tuesday, September 9
South Region

Wednesday, October 8
Central Region

Tuesday, October 28
Mid-Atlantic Region

Thursday, November 6
West Region

What is an UPCEA Regional Salon?

- Designed BY the Region, FOR the Region, and yet open to all UPCEA members
- Blends content and connection with peers in a virtual format
- Typically a half-day, free for UPCEA members, unrecorded and live
- Celebrates the great work happening in the Region

Get involved with UPCEA! Visit upcea.edu/volunteer

◀ **3:45 PM–5:00 PM**
Concurrent Session VI continued

As Told by an Instructional Designer: From Brewing Labs to City Maps, Harnessing Immersive Tools for Course Design

Location: Broadway I

📌 Design & Pedagogy

- **Megan Slattton**, Auburn University
- **Clark Danderson**, Auburn University
- Moderator: **Joana Jebesen**, LearningMate

Breaking Barriers: Applying Universal Design to Foster Equity in Online Learning

Location: Broadway II

📌 Accessibility & UDL

- **Dena Novak**, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
- Moderator: **Steve Ast**, InsideTrack

Digital Accessibility: Get Ready for Updates to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Location: Broadway III

📌 Accessibility & UDL

- **Laura Foley**, University of Missouri-Columbia
- **Manon Allard-Kropp**, University of Missouri-Columbia
- Moderator: **Cole McFarren**, University of Arizona Global Campus

Using AI to Launch Your Next Microcredential

Location: Atrium Ballroom

📌 Artificial Intelligence & Analytics

- **Lee Maxey**, MindMax
- **Ray Schroeder**, UPCEA
- Moderator: **Anissa Vega**, Kennesaw State University

Thursday, July 24

7:00 AM–11:00 AM

Registration Open

Location: Plaza Foyer

7:00 AM–11:00 AM

Exhibit Hall Open

Location: Plaza Foyer

7:00 AM–8:00 AM

Breakfast

Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

8:00 AM–9:15 AM

General Session | Candid Conversations: The Ever-Evolving Online Education Landscape and Positioning for the Future

Location: Grand Ballroom I

8:00 AM–8:05 AM

Remarks from UPCEA's Senior Vice President for Online and Strategic Initiatives Julie Uranis

8:05 AM–9:15 AM

General Session | Candid Conversations: The Ever-Evolving Online Education Landscape and Positioning for the Future



Murphy



Siegenthaler



Coleman



Templeton



Bouchey

Never before has the higher education landscape been more volatile nor has online education been so central to the conversation. Join four experienced online education leaders from a variety of institution types as they discuss trends that are shaping the future of higher ed. Panelists will provide their perspectives on the current state of higher education and discuss potential implications and imperatives for institutions of higher education.

- **Cheryl Murphy**, University of Arkansas
- **Kim Siegenthaler**, University of Hawai'i System
- **Nancy Coleman**, Harvard University
- **Lisa Templeton**, Oregon State University
- Moderator: **Bettyjo Bouchey**, University of Vermont

9:30 AM–10:30 AM

CONCURRENT SESSION VII

Building a Financially Sustainable Lifelong Learning Enterprise: Identifying and Interweaving Complex Revenue Streams

Location: Broadway III

Financial Models & Compliance

- **John McKenzie**, *The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth*
- **Moderator: Jessica DuPont**, *Oregon State University Ecampus*

Navigating Dynamics with Position and Organizational Structure Changes

Location: Broadway I

Leadership & Change Management

- **Kim Siegenthaler**, *University of Hawaii*
- **Gayla Stoner**, *Creighton University*
- **Julie Thalman**, *University of Cincinnati*
- **Moderator: Melody Buckner**, *University of Arizona*

Beyond the Org Chart: Sustaining Impact Across Marketing and Enrollment Services

Location: Broadway II

COLO Credential

Marketing & Enrollment

- **Ali Duerfeldt**, *Oregon State University Ecampus*
- **Kat Ambrose**, *Oregon State University Ecampus*
- **Moderator: Melissa Peraino**, *UPCEA*

Scaling Success and Belonging: Digital Strategies to Address Persistence in Online Learning

Location: Broadway IV

Marketing & Enrollment

- **Luke Dowden**, *Alamo Community Colleges District*
- **Tina Parscal**, *Colorado Community College System*
- **Patrick Wilson**, *New Mexico Highlands University*
- **Miko Nino**, *Rhode Island College*
- **Katy Kappler**, *InScribe*
- **Moderator: Mary Ellen Dello Stritto**, *Oregon State University Ecampus*

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Networking Break: Visit Exhibit Hall

Location: Plaza Foyer

11:00 AM–12:15 PM

Closing General Session | AI-ALOE: Cutting Edge AI for Adult Learning and Online Education

Location: Grand Ballroom I

11:00 AM–11:05 AM

Remarks from UPCEA's Senior Fellow Ray Schroeder

11:05 AM–12:15 PM

General Session | AI-ALOE: Cutting Edge AI for Adult Learning and Online Education



Goel

Schroeder

The National AI Institute for Adult Learning and Online Education (AI-ALOE) is a research institute funded by

the National Science Foundation (NSF) and Accenture through NSF. Led by the Georgia Institute of Technology, AI-ALOE has developed an AI-based transformative model for online adult learning. This model simultaneously uses AI for transforming online adult learning and online adult education to transform AI. These innovative transformations are not “just doing things better” but “doing better things” in effectiveness, efficiency, access, scale, and personalization.

Join the AI-ALOE team and UPCEA Senior Fellow, Ray Schroeder, for an enlightening presentation on AI-ALOE's work on AI theories and techniques for enhancing the quality of adult online education. Their use-inspired fundamental research into AI is grounded in theories of human cognition and learning, supported by evidence from large-scale data, evaluated on a large variety of testbeds, and derived from the scientific process of learning engineering.

- **Ashok Goel**, *Georgia Institute of Technology*
- **Moderator: Ray Schroeder**, *UPCEA*

Featuring:

- **Sandeep Kakar**, *Georgia Institute of Technology*
- **Travis Taylor**, *Georgia Institute of Technology*
- **Rahul Dass**, *Georgia Institute of Technology*

12:15 PM

Adjourn

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

Join us in Boston, Massachusetts at the Westin Boston Seaport District for the **2026 SOLAR: Summit for Online Leadership and Administration**, July 29–31, 2026.

THANK YOU

to the UPCEA groups that helped guide this year's event!

2024–2025 Council for Chief Online Learning Officers Leadership

Sunay Palsole, Texas A&M University
(*co-chair*)

Susan Seal, Mississippi State University
(*co-chair*)

Carmin Chan, Northern Arizona University

Kemi Jona, University of Virginia

Erik Nelson, Columbia University

Tina Parscal, Colorado Community College System

Jerry Rhead, Michigan State University

Evan Silberman, City University of New York

Julie Thalman, University of Cincinnati

Jocelyn Widmer, Los Alamos National Laboratory

Julie Uranis, UPCEA (*ex officio*)

2025–2026 Council for Chief Online Learning Officers Leadership

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Asher Haines, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

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Jay O'Callahan, Kean University

Julie Thalman, University of Cincinnati

Minh Virasak, Santa Clara University

Jocelyn Widmer, Los Alamos National Laboratory

Julie Uranis, UPCEA (*ex officio*)

2024–2025 eDesign Collaborative Network Leadership

Kristlyn Thomas, Loyola University Chicago
(*chair*)

Muhammad Wajahat Afzal, The New School

Aaron Bauer, Colorado State University

Dan Blickensderfer, Purdue University

Nic Bongers, Oakland University

Hala Esmail, Louisiana State University

Connie Hahn, Purdue University

Carrie Hansel, Indiana University

Jennifer Lattin, University of California, Davis

Tracy Miller, Northern Illinois University

Jacqueline Roebuck Sakho, North Carolina A&T State University

Megan Slatton, Auburn University

Catie Weaver, Western Kentucky University

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Christy Jersin Woods, Colorado State University

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(*chair*)

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Michele Gribbins, University of Illinois, Springfield

Aviva Heyn, University of Delaware

Paul Higerson, University of Florida

David Lawrence-Lupton, University of Michigan

Reba-Anna Lee, Northwestern University

Linda Lopez-George, Independent

Rachel Lundstrom, Purdue University

Michelle Morrison, Marshall University

Stevie Rocco, Penn State University

Annie Taylor, Penn State University

Anissa Vega, Kennesaw State University

Phyllis Watson, Florida A&M University

2025–2026 Online Administration Network Leadership

Stevie Rocco, Penn State University (*chair*)

Amy Gaimaro, Molloy University

Aviva Heyn, University of Delaware

Paul Higerson, University of Florida

David Lawrence-Lupton, University of Michigan

Reba-Anna Lee, Northwestern University

Michelle Morrison, Marshall University

Melissa Nakamura, University of Hawaii

Evan Silberman, City University of New York

Annie Taylor, Penn State University

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Learn more about our exhibitors!

Visit the conference app in Guidebook to learn more about each exhibitor! The app is free to download for Android and iOS. In Guidebook, search “2025 UPCEA SOLAR—Portland, OR.” Connect with exhibitors throughout the conference in the Exhibit Hall (Plaza Foyer).



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Advance Education

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- Advance Segmentation
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Alchemy

[Alchemy.works](http://alchemy.works)

- Program and course development
- Instructional design services
- AI-enabled design system



Anthology

anthology.com

- Blackboard
- Ally
- Marketing and Enrollment

CARNEGIE

Carnegie

carnegiehighered.com

- Brand Strategy
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- Enrollment Strategy



EducationDynamics

educationdynamics.com

- Higher Education Marketing Solutions
- Enrollment Management Solutions
- Market Research



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idesignedu.org

- Faculty Centric Online Course Development & Instructional Design
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- Online Program Marketing and Enablement



InScribe

inscribeapp.com

- AI-Powered Student Support Communities
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Exhibit Hall Hours

Tuesday, July 22: 2:30 PM–6:30 PM

Wednesday, July 23: 7:00 AM–5:00 PM

Thursday, July 24: 7:00 AM–11:00 AM



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Sophia Learning

Sophia Learning

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- Student retention/success
- Enrollment Management
- Alternative credentials

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- Learning Design
- Accessibility Remediation
- Multimedia production



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