



**Massachusetts Inclusive  
Postsecondary Education**

**MAIPSE**

# **Emerging Trends 2025**

**A Conference on High-Impact  
College-based Transition Services**

**Wednesday • June 4, 2025**

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON  
CAMPUS CENTER**

**100 Morrissey Boulevard | Boston**



**MASSACHUSETTS CENTER FOR  
INCLUSIVE HIGHER  
EDUCATION & TRANSITION**

INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION, UMASS BOSTON

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

**8:00–8:30am**

**REGISTRATION & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST** | **Room: Ballroom AB**

**8:30–8:45am**

**WELCOME, KEYNOTE INTRODUCTION** | **Room: Ballroom AB**

**Mary Price, Program Director, Massachusetts Inclusive Postsecondary Education (MAIPSE)**  
Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

**8:45–9:30am**

**KEYNOTE: FROM EXCLUSION TO INCLUSION: OUR JOURNEY AND THE ROAD AHEAD**

**Room: Ballroom AB**

**Tom Sannicandro, Disability Rights Advocate, Former Massachusetts State Legislator**

**9:45–10:45AM**

**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND STUDENT-DRIVEN CAREER OUTCOMES**

**Room: Ballroom AB**

**Dr. Elizabeth Tornquist, Faculty Liaison, TerpsEXCEED**  
University of Maryland

TerpsEXCEED at the University of Maryland is career-focused inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) program that aligns the students' inclusive undergraduate course of study, campus activities, and work experiences to help students find a career of their choice. Through a scaffolded career approach, students learn about what they love and are good at through supported exploration, skill building, and experiences. This presentation will share an individualized asset-focused career development approach that leads to successful outcomes. We will share examples of our career process and stories of TerpsEXCEED student career experiences and outcomes.

**ADVANCING INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION IN MASSACHUSETTS**

**Room: Ballroom C**

**Constantia (Dena) Papanikolaou, Chief Legal Counsel**  
Massachusetts Department of Higher Education  
**Chris Grimaldi, Assistant General Counsel**  
Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

Representatives from the Department of Higher Education will provide an overview of the interagency taskforce established to develop recommendations for the Higher Education Bill. Presenters will discuss the regulatory drafting and implementation process as well as the next steps to increase family awareness and ensure ongoing coordination and oversight.

**FROM PLANS TO PRACTICE: EDUCATIONAL COACHING IN ACTION**

**Room: 3540**

**Meredith Becker, Out of District Coordinator/Transition Program Coordinator, Medfield Public Schools**  
**Rachel Connary, Assistant Director of the Community of Inclusive Scholars Program, Salem State University**  
**Crystal Cartwright, Transition Specialist/Intensive Needs Coordinator, Amherst Regional Public Schools**  
**Facilitated by: Irina Cain**

Educational coaches are key to supporting students with disabilities in college. During this session, panelists will cover best practices for training coaches, tracking IEP data in postsecondary settings, and bridging the gap between high school and college supports.

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

**11:00am–12:00pm**

## CELEBRATING STUDENT EXPERIENCES & ENHANCING OPPORTUNITIES

**Room: Ballroom AB**

**Aidan Cheverie**, University of Massachusetts Boston  
**Lounes Hadidi**, MassBay Community College  
**Jovany Myrthil**, University of Massachusetts Boston  
**Christie Thomas**, University of Massachusetts Boston  
**Tatiana Thomas**, MassBay Community College  
**Ewidji Vincent**, University of Massachusetts Boston  
*Facilitated by: Rachel Estremera and Sheila Johnson*

Join us for an interactive session showcasing the experiences of students from the MassBay Transitional Scholars Program and the UMass Boston Inclusive Education Initiative. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with students as they present posters highlighting their academic achievements, internship experiences, campus involvement, and future goals. Following the poster session, students and attendees will come together for a collaborative discussion about inclusive postsecondary education to exchange ideas and explore ways to further enhance college experiences.

## ONGOING IMPROVEMENT FOR IPSE PARTNERSHIPS

**Room: Ballroom C**

**Paul Correia, MAIPSE Director**  
Bristol Community College  
**Ross Hooley, MAIPSE Assistant Director**  
Bristol Community College  
**Ashley Luce, Program Manager, MA Center for Higher Education & Transition**  
Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston  
*Facilitated by: Maria Paiewonsky*

A panel of MAIPSE leaders will share valuable insights into how their institutions are continuously assessing and enhancing IPSE opportunities. The discussion will highlight the launch of partnerships at Bristol Community College and UMass Boston as well as goal-setting approaches and strategies for building and strengthening inclusive program foundations.

## EXECUTIVE FUNCTION COACHING: HOW TO HELP STUDENTS BE BETTER STUDENTS

**Room: 3540**

**Cass Estey, Student Accessibility Services Coordinator/MAIPSE Coordinator**  
Quinsigamond Community College

More and more students entering higher education are needing support in developing their executive functioning skills. With the right strategies and coaching, they can better understand how they learn and set themselves up for success. But what does effective executive function coaching look like—and what are the real benefits? In this session, we'll explore how executive function coaching can play a key role in helping students thrive in college.

**12:00–1:00pm**

**LUNCH**

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

## 1:00–2:00pm

### EXPANDING WORK OPPORTUNITIES ON CAMPUS

**Room: Ballroom AB**

**Jill Eastman, Program Coordinator, Employment & Training**

Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston

College-based transition services emphasize the importance of work-based learning. This session will explore strategies for creating meaningful employment experiences for students, both on campus and in the community.

### DISABILITY SERVICES PANEL: SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**Room: Ballroom C**

**Hannah Huynh, Assistant Director, Ross Center for Disability Services**

University of Massachusetts Boston

**Susan Martin, Program Director for the Center for Accessibility Resources & Services**

Northern Essex Community College

**Theresa Yurewicz, MAIPSE Coordinator**

Northern Essex Community College

Facilitated by: Ashley Luce

A panel of disability services professionals will discuss how they support students with disabilities in college. They will discuss the process for registering with the office, common accommodations, supporting faculty, and educating new students/families.

### BRIDGING EDUCATION: UMASS LOWELL'S EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAM

**Room: 3540**

**Francine Coston, Director, Early College Initiatives**

University of Massachusetts Lowell

This presentation provides an overview of Early College programs in Massachusetts and highlights UMass Lowell's Early College Program, offering high school students the opportunity to earn college credits, gain career exposure, and receive support services. During the session we will discuss the program's benefits, including academic readiness, cost savings, and a collaborative approach between high school teachers and university faculty.

## 2:00–2:15pm

### BREAK

## 2:15–3:15pm

### ADVANCING TOGETHER: PLANNING FOR LONG-TERM GROWTH & SUSTAINABILITY

**Room: Ballroom AB**

**Mary Price, MAIPSE Director**

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

**Lyndsey Nunes, Director, Westfield State Inclusive Postsecondary Education (WIPSE)**

Westfield State University

During this session, Mary and Lyndsey will lead a discussion of the expectations for the long-term advancement of MAIPSE partnerships across the state. They will shed light on the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education efforts to lead a task force, form an advisory board group, onboard new colleges, and provide training and technical assistance to DDS, Mass Abilities, and families. Strategies for campus integration and program advancement will be shared.

## **MASSBAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE: TRANSITIONAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM**

**Room: Ballroom C**

**Phoebe Bustamante, Director of the Accessibility Resources Center**

MassBay Community College

**Kelly Graska, Transitional Scholars Program Coordinator**

MassBay Community College

MassBay Community College's Transitional Scholars Program is a self-sustaining model that creates inclusive college experiences for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This session will highlight the program's growth and development and explore how it supports faculty, families, and state agencies. Presenters will explain how they help families navigate the differences between program-specific and campus-wide support and share their approach to hiring and supervising educational coaches.

## **MAXIMIZING IEP TRANSITION PLANNING THROUGH COLLEGE-BASED TRANSITION SERVICES**

**Room: 3540**

**Maria Paiewonsky, Director, MA Center for Higher Education & Transition**

Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston

This session explores how participation in MAIPSE creates natural opportunities for IEP teams to document and enhance effective transition services. Attendees will learn strategies for leveraging college-based experiences to support students' postsecondary goals.

## SPEAKER BIOS



### MEREDITH BECKER

Meredith Becker MEd, EdS, is a passionate educator and administrator who believes in shaping real-life opportunities, informing and building sustainable relationships between and across people

and places, encouraging conversation, and listening for and centering student voices. She is currently the out of district coordinator and transition program coordinator for Medfield Public Schools.



### PHOEBE BUSTAMANTE

Phoebe Bustamante, JD, is a dedicated higher education professional, specializing in accessibility and inclusive education. With extensive experience at MassBay Community College, Phoebe

currently serves as the director of the Accessibility Resources Center, where she provides strategic leadership to promote inclusiveness and equal educational access for students with disabilities. She oversees staff, including the Transitional Scholars Program and two additional coaching programs.



### IRINA CAIN

Irina Cain coordinates professional development activities for key staff implementing inclusive postsecondary education initiatives in Massachusetts. She also provides training on transition

services to secondary in-service staff and teaches online courses through the University of Massachusetts Boston Transition Leadership program.



### CRYSTAL CARTWRIGHT

Crystal Cartwright has been working in the education and human services fields for the past 23 years. She has served in her current role as the transition specialist for Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools since

2012. Crystal holds a bachelor's in social and behavioral sciences from the University of Southern Maine and a master's in education, moderate disabilities 5-12 from American International College.



### RACHEL CONNARY

Rachel Connary, assistant director of the Community of Inclusive Scholars (CIS), is a key player in Salem State University's MAIPSE initiative. Her journey with CIS began in 2018 as an educational coach, and she has since held

multiple roles within the program. Notably, Rachel has fostered and implemented over 25 internships this school year, including forging new partnerships with Mass General Salem Hospital and continuing relationships with the District Attorney in Salem, Paul Tucker, with CVS through their workforce initiatives, and with multiple departments on campus. Her networking abilities have been a significant asset to the CIS community.

### PAUL CORREIA



For 40 years, Paul has been in the field of human services starting at People, Incorporated working with adults with developmental disabilities. He initiated the organization's move away from the sheltered workshop service model to supported and independent

employment. Paul began his workforce development career at Fall River CETA and SER-Jobs for Progress directing programs for unemployed and disadvantaged people of greater Fall River. Paul semi-retired in 2022 but has continued at Bristol Community College as an adjunct instructor in behavioral sciences. During his 17 years with the college, Paul has directed the Developmental Disabilities Certificate Program for employees of local services provider agencies. In 2019, he and Ross Holley began Bristol's Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (MAICEI). For the Spring 2025 semester, there are 14 students enrolled from five local school districts.



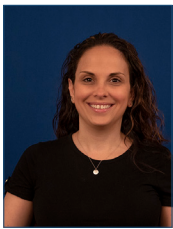
### FRANCINE COSTON

Francine Rudd Coston serves as the director of K-12 Early College Initiatives at the University of Massachusetts Lowell where she has been instrumental in the development, implementation, and delivery of the early

college program that extends opportunities to students who do not normally have access to college. Through her work, she provides support and advocacy to students from diverse backgrounds, religions, and cultures as well as the LGBTQ community. Francine received her BS in human resources from the University of Delaware, MA in human services from Rider University, and her PhD in leadership in education from University of Massachusetts Lowell.



## SPEAKER BIOS



### JILL EASTMAN

Jill Eastman, MA, CESP, has extensive experience in vocational rehabilitation, currently serving as the program coordinator for the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI)/ University of Massachusetts Boston

Employment Services Department. In addition to program management, Jill provides job development, job coaching, career exploration, and vocational counseling support for individuals with disabilities, also serving as the human rights coordinator for the ICI Human Rights Committee. Jill has worked at ICI in various capacities since 2000 and was awarded Job Developer of the Year in 2014 by Massachusetts APSE. Jill became a Certified Employment Services Provider (CESP) in 2013. In 2017, Jill earned the ACRE national certification and joined the Massachusetts APSE Board of Directors.



### CASSANDRA ESTEY

Cassandra Estey, MS, is coordinator of accessibility services at Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) and oversees the MAIPSE program for students with significant intellectual disabilities, developmental

disabilities, or autism spectrum disorders to access a college education and achieve personal goals. Cassandra is also an executive function coach at Beyond BookSmart, supporting neurodiverse individuals to improve academic and life skills. As a fellow neurodiverse person, Cassandra hopes to develop their leadership skills to one day have “a seat at the table” in developing policy and creating new programming for individuals with disabilities.



### RACHEL ESTREMER

Rachel Estremera, MEd, oversees the University of Massachusetts Boston MAIPSE partnership, which provides inclusive higher education opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities and autism. Through

MAIPSE, she works closely with partnering school districts and community provider agencies to expand access to college-based transition services. Previously, Rachel served as the interim vocational and residence life coordinator for a MAIPSE program, further strengthening her expertise in inclusive postsecondary education. Rachel provides technical assistance on college-based transition services. She is deeply committed to helping students navigate their transition to higher education and beyond, ensuring they have the support needed for success in their next adventure.



### KELLY GRASKA

Kelly Graska, BA, is the coordinator of the Transitional Scholars Program at MassBay Community College, working closely with students, families, school districts, and

faculty to create inclusive educational experiences that empower students to succeed in college. With a background in higher education administration and social work, she brings years of experience in student engagement, program coordination, and resource management. Kelly has also worked directly with youth [KA3] and families, providing case management and support services to help them navigate educational and personal challenges. Passionate about equity and inclusion, she actively contributes to initiatives that remove barriers to education and support diverse student populations.



### CHRISTOPHER GRIMALDI

Chris Grimaldi is assistant general counsel for the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE), where he has served the office of chief legal counsel since

August 2022. In addition to his work coordinating and defining the mission of higher education throughout the Commonwealth, Chris was a member of the MAICEI Task Force on Higher Education and subsequently assisted with the promulgation of the newly published regulation, 610 CMR 15.00 “Massachusetts Inclusive Postsecondary Education Initiative Program Guidelines.” Prior to working at DHE, Chris spent the initial years of his career as a civil litigator in private practice and gained substantial experience in higher education law as a legal extern with Boston University’s Office of General Counsel. Chris earned a BA summa cum laude in political science from Boston College and his JD from Boston University School of Law, where he closely studied IDEA-related jurisprudence and the legal obligation of public schools to honor substantive educational rights as an editor for the Boston University Public Interest Law Journal.

## SPEAKER BIOS



### ROSS HOOLEY

Ross Hooley has over 35 years of experience working with people with developmental disabilities. Since 2019, he has been the coordinator of MAIPSE at Bristol Community College.

Ross also works for the Nemasket Group where he is the founding director of the Building Futures Project that helps prepare students with disabilities from local school systems for adulthood. Ross has served as a transition and employment specialist for the Think College Transition Project providing training and technical assistance to dual enrollment partnerships. He has extensive experience directly supporting students with disabilities in postsecondary education, overseeing staff, facilitating person-centered planning, supporting families, and developing customized employment options for students and adults with challenging needs.



### HANNAH HUYNH

Hannah Huynh is assistant director of the Ross Center for Disability Services at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She has spent her career working with students with

disabilities at all levels across elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education. Hannah is passionate about supporting individuals with disabilities through self-advocacy and accessing resources. She enjoys sewing, reading, and spending time with her husband and two dogs.



### SHEILA JOHNSON

Sheila Johnson, MA, is a knowledge translation associate, translating complex research into clear, engaging, and practical content. She has developed learning modules, email

marketing campaigns, and social media materials for three ICI projects: the National Coordinating Center, Employment First Florida, and the State Employment Leadership Network. Before joining ICI, Sheila taught English and communications courses at several colleges across New England, bringing her expertise in effective communication and education to her current role. Sheila supports the development of training materials and marketing campaigns as part of the MA Center for Inclusive Higher Education & Transition.



### ASHLEY LUCE

Ashley Luce, MA, is the program manager of the MAIPSE training and technical assistance project at the MA Center for Inclusive Higher Education & Transition at the ICI. Ashley provides consultation on college-based

transition services, disability services, college preparation, and the range of support available to students in higher education. With a strong background in higher education, she has served as a disability services coordinator and program coordinator for University of Massachusetts Boston and Framingham State Universities MAIPSE partnerships.



### SUSAN MARTIN

Susan Jane Martin is a seasoned educator and program director with over 30 years of experience in higher education. She holds a master's in curriculum and instruction from Northeastern University and a bachelor's in

psychology from UMass Amherst. As the program director for the Center for Accessibility Resources & Services at Northern Essex Community College (NECC), Susan leads initiatives that ensure compliance with disability laws; fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion; and enhances campus accessibility. She trains faculty and staff, develops policies, and manages a diverse team. Susan co-leads the ADA Accessible Media Project and is involved in the MAIPSE partnership. Her expertise spans strategic leadership, data analysis, conflict resolution, and communication, alongside a passion for advocacy in higher education.



### LYNDSLEY NUNES

Lyndsey Nunes, PhD, MPH, has served as the director of WIPSE at Westfield State University since 2013. Lyndsey is focused on systems and policy changes that result in more inclusive higher education opportunities for individuals

with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Lyndsey has provided consultation to local state agencies and MAIPSE partnerships to support the implementation of the new MA law expanding college access for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Lyndsey has more than 15 years of experience working with students with disabilities ages 8–22 in a variety of settings, such as public schools, private schools, home consultations, and inclusive postsecondary education. Lyndsey received her PhD in special education from the University of Massachusetts Amherst; MS in behavior analysis and MS in special education from Simmons University; and her Master of Public Health from University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.





## MARIA PAIEWONSKY

Maria Paiewonsky, EdD, is director of the MA Center for Inclusive Higher Education & Transition at the ICI at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She also serves as director of

the Massachusetts Transition Leadership Initiative, a personnel preparation program that prepared master's level transition specialists at University of Massachusetts Boston. Maria has coordinated numerous secondary and transition related projects and works with teachers, college staff, interdisciplinary team members, students, and families to develop positive and inclusive college, work, and community outcomes. For over 20 years, Maria has overseen in-person and online training and technical assistance for partners of the MAIPSE initiative. These partners include college program coordinators, special education administration, transition and special education staff, educational coaches, and peer mentors.



## CONSTANTIA PAPANIKOLAOU

Constantia (Dena) Papanikolaou is the chief legal counsel for the Board of Higher Education, and its executive agency, the Department of Higher Education (DHE). Dena has over 30

years of combined legal experience working in both the public and private sectors. Dena joined the DHE in July 2011 where her practice involves setting and enforcing state higher education policy and regulations, with focused expertise and interest in institutional closures and mergers; campus safety and violence prevention; advancing student success initiatives; the search, selection, compensation, and evaluation of university and college presidents; and trustee accountability and professional development initiatives. Immediately prior to joining the DHE, Dena served as general counsel for the Department of Early Education and Care. Before that, she was the judicial law clerk to federal District Court Judge Charles P. Kocoras, N.D. Ill., and was a litigation associate at Burns and Levinson. Dena holds a BA in politics and African and African American studies from Brandeis University, and a JD from Suffolk University Law School. She is a member of the Massachusetts Bar, the Illinois Bar, and the Federal Bar for the Northern District of Illinois.



## MARY PRICE

Mary Price has served as the MAIPSE director for the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education since 2020, overseeing 20 inclusive college partnerships statewide. She supports MAIPSE coordinators, advises

campuses on grant proposals, and organizes statewide conferences and meetings. Recently, Mary served as the task force lead, collaborating with state and government agencies to create a strategic plan to implement the new law expanding college access for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Previously, Mary directed the EXCEL (formerly MAIPSE) program at Bridgewater State University for over a decade, launching Massachusetts' first four-year inclusive higher education program with a residential component. With a strong background in grant writing, special education, and higher education, she began her career as a middle and high school educator.



## TOM SANNICANDRO

Tom Sannicandro is a disability rights advocate, attorney, and former Massachusetts state legislator, with a career spanning over 20 years dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual

and developmental disabilities. As chair of the Joint Committee on Higher Education during his 12 years in the legislature, Tom championed groundbreaking laws, including the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment initiative, which expands access to higher education for students with intellectual disabilities in public colleges and universities. Tom is the proud father of an adult son with Down syndrome, a personal connection that has fueled his lifelong commitment to disability advocacy. He holds degrees from the College of the Holy Cross, Suffolk University Law School, Harvard University, and a PhD from Brandeis University, where his dissertation focused on the impact of postsecondary education on employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities. He is also the founder of [SpecialNeedsTrustsOnline.com](http://SpecialNeedsTrustsOnline.com).

## SPEAKER BIOS



### DR. ELIZABETH TORNQUIST

Dr. Elizabeth (Betsy) Tornquist, PhD, is a faculty specialist at the Center for Transition and Career Innovation (CTCI) and the faculty liaison for TerpsEXCEED, a 2-year inclusive living and learning

postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities at the University of Maryland College Park. Betsy began her career as a transition specialist with two school districts in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. She joined the faculty at the University of Maryland as a postdoctoral research fellow in the College of Education in 2005 where she was a grant coordinator, university supervisor, and professional development school coordinator. From 2015–2022, she was the secondary transition project manager for the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education. She rejoined the faculty at the University of Maryland in 2022. Dr. Tornquist received a bachelor's degree in special education from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, a master's degree in Secondary/Transition Special Education from the University of Maryland, and a doctorate degree in Special Education from George Mason University.



### THERESA YUREWICZ

Theresa Yurewicz, MEd., is the MAIPSE Coordinator at Northern Essex Community College and a staff member in the college's Center for Accessibility Resources & Services since 2019. She

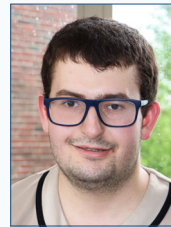
is a licensed Massachusetts special education teacher with 9+ prior years' experience supporting students in inclusion classrooms and programs in the middle school and high school levels. Theresa received her master's in education and bachelor's in child, family and community studies at Merrimack College. Theresa combines her knowledge and experience with strong advocacy efforts to support and encourage each student in MAIPSE at Northern Essex to reach their goals and dreams!

## STUDENT SPEAKERS



### AIDAN CHEVERIE

University of Massachusetts Boston



### LOUNES HADIDI

MassBay Community College



### JOVANY MYRTHIL

University of Massachusetts Boston



### CHRISTIE THOMAS

University of Massachusetts Boston



### TATIANA THOMAS

MassBay Community College



### EWIDJI VINCENT

University of Massachusetts Boston

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