

ILLINOIS AER Mail – Fall 2019

Happy November, IAER Members!

It brings me so much joy to address you as the board and various committees plan this year's IAER conference. The year 2020 certainly brings the opportunity of vision related themes and topics. I encourage you to look ahead to this summer when the AER biennial conference July 22-26, 2020 will convene in St. Louis. This amazing conference, being practically local, is an extraordinary chance for learning, collaborating and having a great time. Consider applying for a conference stipend, volunteering or presenting!

Membership to AER comes with incredible benefits. Please consider talking about IAER with your colleagues and encourage participation in our organization. Our state conference is known as a strong support to our members, providing general sessions and breakouts that support member's need for more knowledge and professional credits.

Why Membership Matters

When you join AER, you join a community of excellence. No matter your role or the number of years in the field, membership in AER places you among a group of elite professionals. AER is a member centered organization where members support each other; and for that reason and many others, AER is constantly evolving, growing and listening. Your goals and your needs are our purpose. Membership in AER is significant: it's the one place where like minded professionals come together to make sure members have what they need to succeed.

I look forward to seeing each of you at IAER 2020 in Naperville!

Amy Lund,
IAER President

IAER Board Members

President:

Amy Lund
braillelund@gmail.com

Secretary:

Stacy Kelly
skelly@niu.edu

Members-at-Large:

Elizabeth Abelson Budzik- budzike@d62.org
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President Elect:

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duncanj@d62.org

Treasurer:

Jasmine Wells
jasmine.wells@illinois.gov

Past President:

Mindy Ely
msely@ilstu.edu

****Don't forget to apply for the IAER Scholarship, due December 14, 2019! ****

Nominations

Nominations for the IAER board is upon us! The positions available for running are: President-Elect, Treasure, Secretary and Member at Large (6). To run for President-Elect, you must have served on the board in some capacity previously. All interested parties, please send your biographical sketch to Amy Lund, braillelund@gmail.com

Here are the guidelines:

1. During the first week of December in each odd-numbered calendar year, the chairperson of the Nominations Committee shall solicit, via mail, email or other electronic means approved by the board, nominations for each elective office or seat on the Board of Directors. Responses to this solicitation shall be postmarked or electronically time-stamped no later than January 15th of the following year.

2. Before any nomination shall be considered valid, a biographical sketch of not more than 150 words shall be on file with the Chair or designee of the appropriate nominations committee. The nominee shall submit a written statement of willingness to serve if elected. Membership of the nominee and the nominator will also be verified.

3. In the event that at least two nominees for each elected office are not submitted by the membership, the Nominations Committee will attempt to solicit two nominees for each elected position on the final slate.

4. During the second week of February in each even numbered calendar year, a ballot, based upon nominations for membership and prepared by the Nominations Committee will be mailed, emailed or posted on the Internet to each voting member, accompanied by a biographical sketch of each nominee.

5. Each voting member of the Illinois Chapter may vote for one candidate for each elective position on each ballot received. Ballots must be postmarked or received electronically in the manner specified no later than April 1, to be valid.

6. The candidate receiving the most votes for each elective position shall become the holder of the office at the final business meeting of the AER biennial conference. In the event of a tie vote in the election for any office, the election shall thereon be decided by lot.

Committee Reports

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Communications Committee

Do you have an idea for a workshop but need funding in order to bring your idea to fruition? Are you a current IAER member? If you answered yes to these questions, then I have the solution! Apply for a workshop grant! Grants are available for up to \$400 for this year.

So far, we have only awarded one workshop so there are funds still available! Go to the IAER website for all the details.

Mini Grants/Stipends

Greetings IAER Members!

Available funds running low for professional development opportunities? How about implementing the programs your students/clients need? Well IAER is here to help!

Members are **each** allotted \$100 awards for use toward IAER conference expenses and \$200 awards to ***national and international*** conferences (e.g. ICEVI, International AER, CEC, AFB, APH, etc.)! This is a great way to offset the rising cost of hotel stays, food, and registration and is one of the benefits of joining AER! We have **\$1800 available** for conference expenses!

We still have \$2000 available in mini-grant funds! Priority is given to new and innovative programs but **please don't let this discourage you from sending in an application!** We have ample money for mini-grants, even if you have applied for a specific program in the past. As a member, you can use this money for planning quality programs for students, clients, and families.

Last, but not least, the Volunteer Direct Service grant is available for this fiscal year. If you or someone you know is traveling to provide services or programming in another country or area of the USA, please apply for this grant! More information is available at <https://aerbvi.org/about/chapters/illinois/>

If you have any questions, please see the contact information below.

Email: mollyclesen@gmail.com

Address:

Molly Pasley

300 High Oak Dr.

East Peoria, IL 61611

Molly Pasley

IAER Mini-Grant/Stipend/Volunteer Service Grant Chair

Workshop Committee

- Do you have a workshop, event or conference you think the membership would like to hear about? Email us at ilaeremail@gmail.com and we will blast it out to the membership
- Tag @IllinoisAER on Instagram, @IllinoisAER on Twitter, and Illinois AER on Facebook with any and all of your exciting professional tips, tricks and adventures
- Follow us!! @IllinoisAER on Instagram, @IllinoisAER on Twitter, and Illinois AER on Facebook

As always reach out with any questions at ilaeremail@gmail.com and watch our website for conference news. <https://aerbvi.org/about/chapters/illinois/>

Awards Committee

Hello IAER members! It is that time again! Do you know an organization, police department, business, teacher, rehab specialist or overall exceptional individual in our field? Nominate them for an award! There are several awards to choose from. Three are individual awards for excellence in teaching, rehab and distinguished service and one community partner award. Let's show our colleagues and community partners how much their work in our field is appreciated and valued. The community partner does not have to be an IAER member or work in the field. Spread the word! If you need a copy of the application or have any questions, please email Lisa Meadors at lisameadors@gmail.com. The deadline for applications is **December 20, 2019**. Thanks!

IVLC Advocacy Committee

As part of the Illinois Vision Leadership Council's four-year plan, a sub-committee was formed on October 3rd, 2018 with the goal to spread awareness of the current shortage of vision professionals. This subcommittee is called the IVLC Recruitment Committee or more commonly known as Why Eye Teach.

Here are some statistics since forming the sub-committee in 2018.

- Instagram = 311 Followers
- Facebook = 110 Followers and 106 Likes
- Twitter = 54 Followers
- Website
 - Data collected using Google Analytics starting March 2019.
 - 472 Page views
 - 82.44% of views in United States (Illinois, California, D.C., Florida, Indiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, and Arizona).
 - 5.34% in Iraq
 - 1.53% in Brazil
 - 1.53% in Czechia
 - 1.53% in Germany
 - 1.53% in India

- 0.76 % in Canada
- 0.76 % in Switzerland
- 0.76 % in Spain
- 0.76 % in France

Keep sharing our social media information and get the word out! People from all over the world are listening and wanting to know more about joining our field!

If you know of any high school students, college students, or anyone looking to change their careers, please spread the word about this great field! Ways to spread the word include going to your districts or agencies on career days, speaking to neighbors, families, or friends who are interested in a new career path, or by sharing our information on social media.

Follow, share, and contact us...

Website- www.WhyEyeTeach.info

Email- WhyEyeTeach@Gmail.com

Facebook- WhyEyeTeach: IVLC Recruitment Committee

Twitter- WhyEyeTeach

Instagram- WhyEyeTeach

While you're there use the hashtag #WhyEyeTeach and tell us why you are a vision professional or what you love most about your job!

Resource Updates



Illinois State University Update

It has been a busy and exciting fall at Illinois State University with many new faces and some exciting new programs on the horizon. We welcomed a freshman class of nine students to our low vision and blindness undergraduate program as well as a new faculty member, Dr. Natalie Shaheen. We have two new programs on the horizon, a fully online master's program to train teachers to become teachers of the visually impaired and a second master's program designed to train those already licensed as teachers of the visually impaired who want to work in early intervention. Details about these exciting new opportunities are below.

Online M.S. Ed. Degree in Low Vision and Blindness

This is for those wanting to become a TVI. The program will begin in the summer of 2021 and will be **fully online**. Eligible applicants must hold a professional educator license (PEL). Building on this background as an educator, students will acquire specialized training in low vision and blindness as they take 6-8 semester hours for 5 consecutive semesters to earn the 32-hour M.S. Ed. degree. This training will enable graduates to apply for the special education endorsement in low vision and blindness through the Illinois State Board of Education. The program consists of nine courses that will provide scholars with

foundational knowledge about visual impairments (SED 413, 432); specialized content knowledge (i.e. braille and access technology) (SED 433, 435, 438); and specialized methods for assessment and teaching when students do not learn through vision (SED 434, 436, 437, 439). Several courses throughout the program include clinical projects so that scholars can apply concepts as they are being learned. As a final component of the program, scholars will complete an intensive clinical placement in which they will be expected to apply knowledge and skills from all coursework in supervised classroom experiences with students who have visual impairments. Those who are interested should contact Dr. Mindy Ely at msely@ilstu.edu. Dr. Ely is keeping a list of interested applicants so that notification can be sent when the program application process is made available. This is expected to occur in the Fall of 2020.

Funded M.S. Ed. Degree in Early Intervention Sensory Disabilities

This is for TVIs who want to work in early intervention. ISU is now accepting applications for a new opportunity in which six scholars will be **fully funded in a 32-hour master's** program focusing on early intervention and sensory disabilities. This program is funded by a grant through the US Dept of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The program will begin this summer (2020) and last for 5 consecutive semesters. Fall and Spring classes will be offered online. Summer classes will be offered in two locations (i.e. Joliet area and ISU) with students attending one of the locations over a 5-week period. The program is designed to foster a transdisciplinary learning environment with each cohort consisting of 6 teachers of the visually impaired, 6 teachers of the deaf, and 6 speech and language pathologists. While the educators will take all classes together, they will partner with the speech pathology students for three of the classes to encourage collaborative learning and exchange. For more information, contact Dr. Mindy Ely at msely@ilstu.edu. We anticipate that online application will open in January.

Northern Illinois University Update

Have a job opening? Please forward information about job openings to Stacy Kelly (skelly@niu.edu) so we can share this information with our recent and upcoming graduates.

New grant funding awarded to NIU Visual Disabilities Program: We just found out last week that we have been awarded a 5 year grant for training for adult services in the areas of VRT and O&M for people who are visually impaired. So, to add to the funding that we already had available for our TVI, O&M, and CATIS programs for children who are visually impaired we now have funding for those specializing in teaching adults who are visually impaired in our VRT and O&M programs here at Northern Illinois University.

Please see our national advertisement below and share widely with your networks.

**U.S Department of Education
Office of Special Education Programs**

Generous Student Financial Assistance Available in TVI/O&M/VRT/CATIS: We have remaining slots for full funding in our TVI, O&M, VRT and CATIS programs. We would like to share our ad designed for a national audience. Please feel free to forward it on to others who might be interested, in state or out of state.

**Training for a Rewarding Career
Generous Student Financial Assistance**

Teaching Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired, Providing Orientation and Mobility Services for Those Children, and/or Specializing in Assistive Technology for Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired

AND

Teaching Adults who are Blind or Visually Impaired and Providing Orientation and Mobility Services for Those Adults

Northern Illinois University (DeKalb, Illinois) offers a nationally regarded program at the graduate level for individuals who wish to join a rewarding career in teaching children or adults who are blind or visually impaired as a teacher of students with visual impairments, orientation and mobility instructor, or assistive technology specialist for children with visual impairments or a vision rehabilitation therapist for adults who are visually impaired. There is an overwhelming need for professionals who specialize in instruction for people who are visually impaired. As a consequence, there are many job opportunities in all regions of the United States. Individuals who choose this career path can anticipate having no difficulty obtaining life-long employment with great job security! In addition to numerous job opportunities, good pay, and excellent job security, individuals who choose this career path experience a sense of fulfillment not commonly found in other careers. These professionals play a significant role in the lives of children who are visually impaired, adults who are visually impaired, and their families.

Generous student financial assistance is available. We will pay all in-state or out-of-state tuition, all fees, health insurance, and a stipend of \$5,520 per calendar year for qualified individuals who wish to come to Northern Illinois University to enroll in the Visual Disabilities Graduate Program focusing on special education for children who are blind or visually impaired with an additional emphasis in assistive technology.

For more information, go to the following YouTube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUfWnBbNZMg>

Also, go to the following website to read about the program:

www.vision.niu.edu

Interested individuals can contact the Project Director, Stacy Kelly, at the following e-mail:

skelly@niu.edu

Or by calling 815-753-4103

Admissions requirements are as follows:

Online application with a fee of \$60

GRE scores of 30%tile verbal and 30%tile quantitative (\$205 fee)

Official transcripts of all previous academic work

GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale

ACT score of 22 or successful completion of the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP)

Two letters of recommendation

Personal statement

The link to the online application process for the Graduate School can be found on the page, www.vision.niu.edu.

The direct link to the online application can be found on the page,

<https://www.niu.edu/grad/admissions/apply-now.shtml>.

This is not an online program. All courses except for the field experiences (e.g., student teaching and the internships) are taken on campus in DeKalb, Illinois, the home of Northern Illinois University. DeKalb is conveniently located 60 miles west of Chicago, Illinois.

Students progress through the program in cohorts. Each cohort begins in the fall of each academic year. The generous financial assistance is awarded on a first come, first served basis to qualified applicants. Be sure to notify Stacy Kelly (skelly@niu.edu) of your intent to apply to ensure that your name is included in the pool of candidates!