



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 15, 2020

Contact: Lynne Baker

847.831.8024

Lynne.Baker@illinois.gov

10th Annual College Changes Everything® Conference: Reimagined – Launches Virtually on July 22nd, 2020

CHICAGO – Illinois’ premier higher education conference focused on improving access to and success in postsecondary education will be held virtually this year over a two-week period with live events beginning July 22. For almost a decade, the College Changes Everything® Conference has brought together education leaders and administrators, counselors, non-profit and community-based organizations, elected officials, public sector leaders, students and other professionals to innovate and collaborate in addressing best practices, ideas and resources to expand student success across Illinois.

“Especially in light of the challenges of this pandemic, it’s more important than ever for stakeholders to work together to provide students with the support, knowledge, and opportunities needed to successfully transition from education to employment,” said Eric Zarnikow, executive director of the [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](http://illinois.gov/ISAC), the state’s college access and financial aid agency and host of the CCE Conference. “While this year we won’t have the benefit of the in-person collaboration, discussion and networking for which the CCE Conference is known, we look forward to offering both live and recorded sessions that share information and resources from state and national experts in advancing student success.”

This year’s live keynote address, entitled *Music, Movies and NASA: Pop-Culture and Space Exploration Illuminating the Way to Change*, will be delivered by Dr. Shawn Bergman, Kulynych/Cline Distinguished Professor of Psychology at Appalachian State University and Director of Research at Vela Institute. The keynote will explore reasons people and organizations have trouble changing and adapting to emerging problems. It will include a series

of interactive activities and provide evidence-based strategies and techniques to break free from business-as-usual approaches. Other live and recorded sessions will cover campus equity plans to eliminate gaps in degree completion by race, supporting Dreamers, honoring Black students' aspirations, breaking down affordability barriers to college access and completion, women in STEM, micro-internships, and much more.

View a list of live and recorded sessions and register now at <https://www.collegechangeseverything.org/2020-CCE>. To view recorded sessions at your leisure, register just once. Register for live sessions separately. All events are free, and recordings will remain available on the conference webpage. Join the conversation on social media by using #CCE4me.

The College Changes Everything Conference is sponsored by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission in collaboration with partners: Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois College Access Network, Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities, Advance Illinois, Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University, Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University, Generations Serving Generations, ACT Now and Women Employed.

About College Changes Everything

College Changes Everything® (CCE) is a college access movement that recognizes that college can be a life changing experience not only for students, but also for families and communities. In Illinois and across the nation, those who obtain education beyond high school not only see a significant impact on their potential career prospects and future salary, but also change levels of poverty, life expectancy, crime and obesity rates in their communities. CCE is an essential part of helping Illinois reach its goal of increasing the proportion of adults in the state with high quality degrees or credentials to 60% by 2025. Find out more and join the conversation at collegechangeseverything.org.

About ISAC

The mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is to provide Illinois students with information and assistance to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information on education and financial aid for students and their families—giving them access to the tools they need to make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers, ISAC can help students make those choices a reality. Find us at isac.org or on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ILStudentAssistance) (@ILStudentAssistance), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ISACfinaid) and on Instagram @ISACfinaid.

###