

# AEROGRAM January 2020

Happy New Year from AERO

2019 was quite busy for the AERO Board. We just wrapped up a great Division Day in October, finalized a position paper on the importance of VRT certifications and amended our By-Laws. Most importantly we have elected our 2020 board with some great new faces and some new divisions! Always remember that you as members are why this board exists. If there is something you would like us to take on in 2020 please let me or any board member know. We already have some great plans in the works, but we are always up for more!!

Vicki Lorenz, AERO Board President

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## WHO ARE WE?

Please reach out to any board member with ideas, questions or concerns.

### 2020 Board Members

Past President	Jessica Chandler
President	Vicki Lorenz
President Elect	Staci Wills
Secretary	VACANT
Treasurer	Sarah Kelly
Board Member	Stephanie Welch-Grenier
Board Member	Ying-Ting Chiu
Board Member	Karen Koehler
Board Member	Angela Petro
Board Member	Molley Alford
Board Member	Lisa Milliron
Board Member	Jerry Hillyer
Board Member	Kim Maruna

## **Division Leaders**

Education Curriculum

Shelley McCoy

Information and Technology

Jordy Stringer

Low Vision Rehabilitation

Lisa Milliron

MD & Deafblind/Infant & Preschool

Jenni Remeis

Orientation and Mobility

Jessica Chandler & Kim Maruna

Vision Rehab Therapy

Stephanie Welch-Grenier

Physical Activity & Recreation

Anna Devine & Brendan Devine

Itinerant Personnel

Molley Alford

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## **My Experience of Attending the 2019 Science Educators for Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice International Conference**

Ying-Ting Chiu

Department of Teaching and Learning, The Ohio State University

### **Science Educators for Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice (SEEDS)**



**Annual International Conference  
Old Dominion University  
College of Education and Professional Studies  
4301 Hampton Blvd  
Norfolk, Virginia 23529  
October 11 - 14, 2019**

Thanks to AERO's support, I was awarded the David H. Newmeyer Member Grant to attend the 2019 Science Educators for Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice (SEEDS) International Conference in October 2019. This year, the SEEDS held its second annual conference at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. It was a four-day conference in which attendees shared their work that promotes equity, diversity, and social justice in science education. The theme of this year's conference was "*Reclaiming the profession: Science teaching and science teacher education as social justice.*" Therefore, we talked primarily about the role of the science teacher and the support that science teachers need to teach diverse students, especially students who are underrepresented in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields.

In the conference, we discussed gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, politics, community, urban and rural schools, etc. I was one of the few attendees that were concerned about students with disabilities in the science classroom and brought up the challenges that students with disabilities face when learning science. Specifically, I talked about the needs of students who are blind or visually impaired in the science classroom and some issues in science education for students with visual impairments for other conference attendees to reflect on. For instance, science teaching relies heavily on visual methods. However, students with visual impairments, especially those who are blind, can barely use their vision to carry out the tasks that need to use vision as their sighted peers. Do we as science educators allow students with visual impairments to use alternative methods to learn science and report their observations? This is a difficult question that has no simple answer to it. However, it helped the attendees to think more deeply and carefully in terms of how science is often taught and approached and what kind of social justice that we are advocating for our students by using students with visual impairments as an example.

Up until now, disability has not much been discussed in the field of science education. To my knowledge, it is because of the gap between science education and special education. The science educators and science education researchers that I met at the SEEDS conference were very intrigued by the discussion of the science learning of students with visual impairments. They asked many questions and listened and discussed attentively. Many of them told me that they had never thought about the needs of students with visual impairments in the science

classroom because they had not met any of them. I was not surprised by the response. As a matter of fact, my primary intention to attend this conference was to meet more educators and researchers in science education and share my knowledge and experience working with students with visual impairments with them. I hope students with disabilities, including students with visual impairments, will be discussed more in the science education community in the future.

Equity, diversity, and social justice have gradually drawn attention in the field of science education. Even though gender and race have been the primary foci. Disability has gradually been included in the discussion in the science community. To bridge the two fields, i.e., science education and special education, at the end of special education, we need more organizations like AERO that supports interdisciplinary work to promote education for students with disabilities, including students with visual impairments on a broader scope. Again, my sincere appreciation to AERO for supporting my work that aims to promote science education for students with visual impairments in the science education community.

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## **CONFERENCES**

The 2019 AERO Division Day Conference – Together Towards Tomorrow was a great success. We had over 100 attendees and raised over \$5000 to help AERO continue to serve our members! We are already underway planning for the 2020 conference on 10/23/20 in Butler County. We will REIMAGINE 20/20. If you have ideas for presentations or requests, we are always open.

## **REIMAGINE 20/20**

**10/23/20**

**Butler County ESC Hamilton, OH**

## **Keynote Speaker and Sessions with Cole Imperi**

### **LIVE A BRIGHTER LIFE EMBRACE THE LIGHT OF LOSS**

Cole teaches people, businesses and organizations how to embrace loss, difficult moments and mistakes to turn those into foundations for growth

Check out her TedTalk:

<https://youtu.be/W00FCKKnlyg>

**Thursday Pre-conference 4-6pm**

**Friday's Events: Lunch banquet to honor AERO Award  
Recipients and Post-conference Mocktail Hour**

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## **Best Practices for Addressing the Shortage of Certified Vision Professionals**

The overall shortage of vision professionals across the United States has led to many agencies, organizations, and policy makers using untrained staff to provide services to individuals across the life span with visual impairments. The large variance and accuracy with which these services are provided by untrained individuals has led to improper training, dangerous techniques, and the need for retraining at a later point in the individual's life. Albeit, well-meaning supervisors and administrators have made decisions to use untrained and uncertified staff to provide said services in an attempt to address staffing shortages; however, these practices leave something to be desired. As AERBVI members, we strive to provide the most recent up-to-date research to ensure that consumers are receiving the best services and training available. In an attempt to address the lack of best practices research, the RSA (Rehabilitation Services Administration) tasked the OIB-TAC to provide current research to the field.

The OIB-TAC (Older Individuals who are Blind Technical Assistance Center) and Mississippi State University's National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision have worked to research and address service delivery strategies

and techniques for older adults with visual impairments to ensure, that despite the overall shortages of instructors in the field and limited financial resources, individuals receiving rehabilitation services are provided the best service delivery available to them by university trained and certified individuals from the field of vision rehabilitation. OIB-TAC gathered a task force of certified professionals and leaders, in the area of blindness and low vision research, to address the topic of best practices for older blind adults receiving rehabilitation services.

*Best practices are service delivery strategies or techniques that appear effective based on available evidence; are client-centered; are sensitive to the context of the service delivery setting; and are responsive to evolving technology, resources, and/or research (OIB-TAC, 2017).*

This task force convened in January 2017, with a culminating report covering best practices recommended for agencies providing services to older adults. The service delivery methods and best practices discovered and discussed in the final draft of the OIB-TAC report (2018) addresses the need for certified staff, consistency in training methods, and direct supervision by certified staff while an individual is working towards certification. The final report provides agencies a way to move forward towards best practices in their hiring process, by ensuring that all non-certified staff are provided direct supervision by certified staff, while working to receive certification themselves. OIB-TAC determined:

*Acceptable practice includes a plan to move toward the best practice, and the unacceptable practice is typically regarded as unsafe, detrimental, or nonproductive in assisting OIB consumers become as independent as possible (OIB-TAC, 2018).*

As AERBVI members, we should always strive to ensure that all consumers of blind rehabilitation services across the life span are provided with the best services available to them through the use of university trained and certified staff, in the area of training taking place. The AERO Board encourages all Ohio providers, administrators, and policy makers to consider OIB-TAC's findings and work towards implementing best practices into their hiring decisions and service delivery models for individuals across the life span. We also encourage all

individuals completing training in the vision rehabilitation field to sit for standardized exams to obtain certification or licensure in their given area of study. OIB-TAC's full best practices report can be found at the link below:

[https://www.oib-tac.org/sites/www.oib-tac.org/files/OIB%20Best%20Practices\\_1.pdf](https://www.oib-tac.org/sites/www.oib-tac.org/files/OIB%20Best%20Practices_1.pdf)

AERO's Board Members would like to thank RSA and OIB-TAC for their work in addressing and researching the topic of best-practices in the field of vision rehabilitation.

Sincerely,

AERO Ohio Board

Vicki Lorenz, AERO President

Stephanie Welch-Grenier, CVRT/COMS, Public Policy & Advocacy Chair