



2026 Annual Conference: Speakers & Sessions

Please stay tuned for more information. Agenda subject to change.

Sponsor Workshop Sessions

Tuesday, September 15, 2026 | 9:45 AM - 10:45 AM

TBD

Room: Meeting Room 01

TBD

Room: Meeting Room 02

TBD

Room: Meeting Room 03

Sponsor Workshop Sessions

Tuesday, September 15, 2026 | 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

TBD

Room: Meeting Room 01

TBD

Room: Meeting Room 02

TBD

Room: Meeting Room 03

Concurrent Sessions 1
Tuesday, September 15, 2026 | 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Rebuilding Access: The Evolution of a Boutique High Stakes Accessible Testing Center

Room: Meeting Room 01

Jarret Dyer, College of DuPage

Kelli Kerns, College of DuPage

This session explores the evolution of the College of DuPage Access and Accommodations Office as it navigated shifting campus needs, resource constraints, and testing demands. Once home to a full-service testing center, the office later operated without one before re-establishing a high-stakes, boutique testing environment featuring three private, fully equipped rooms and four testing carrells. Attendees will learn how the office redesigned workflows, strengthened partnerships, implemented new technology, and balanced accessibility priorities with institutional expectations. The presentation will highlight lessons learned, challenges faced, and practical strategies for building or reimagining an accessible testing center that supports both students and campus stakeholders.

NCTA Proctor Certified -- Now What? Maximizing the Value of Your Certification

Room: Meeting Room 02

Alan Dixon-Hurd, California State University-Sacramento

Jade Saeger, Ozarks Technical Community College

Lisa Holben, University of Mississippi

Earning the NCTA Proctor Certification is an important professional milestone for testing staff and proctors. But once certified, many professionals ask: Now what? This session explores how to fully leverage NCTA Proctor Certification to strengthen testing operations, enhance professional credibility, and advance institutional compliance efforts. Participants will learn about the tangible benefits of certification for individuals and institutions, strategies for integrating certification standards into daily practice, and a clear roadmap for maintaining certification through Continuing Education Units (CEUs). Attendees will leave with practical tools for tracking CEUs, identifying qualifying professional development opportunities, and creating a long-term plan for ongoing engagement with NCTA and the testing profession.

AI in the Testing Center? No Way! Yes Way!

Room: Meeting Room 03

Kelsey Jordan, Purdue University

Artificial intelligence is quickly becoming part of everyday work, but how does it fit into a testing center? This session explores practical, responsible ways AI can support testing professionals at all levels. Participants will learn how AI can assist with communication, organization, documentation, and workflow efficiency, without replacing professional

judgment or compromising test security. Through real-world examples and discussion, attendees will gain insight into what AI can and cannot do in a testing environment. This session is designed for anyone interested in working more efficiently, reducing administrative burden, and thoughtfully integrating new tools into their daily responsibilities.

Compliance Without Burnout: Meeting Testing Standards While Supporting Staff

Room: A02

Sandra Brasch, University Testing Center-University of Central Florida

College testing centers operate in highly regulated environments where compliance with testing standards is essential, yet staffing challenges and high testing volumes can make consistency difficult. This session explores practical strategies for upholding policy while supporting staff capacity and morale. Drawing from experience overseeing paper- and computer-based testing operations, the presenter will share workflows, training approaches, documentation habits, and quality assurance practices that reduce errors without creating burnout. Participants will leave with templates and ideas to embed compliance into daily operations, normalize quality checks, and create a team culture where standards are clear, manageable, and consistent, even during peak testing.

Student Employee Empowerment: Maximizing their Potential

Room: A03

Dr. Larry Chapa, Texas State University

Heather Kristoff, Texas State University

Saidat Adelakun, Texas State University

This presentation explores strategies for maximizing the potential of student employees within a high-volume testing environment. Attendees will learn about the organizational structure at Texas State University's Testing, Evaluation, and Measurement Center (TEMC), where more than 30 student employees across two campus centers help administer over 15,000 exams annually. This session highlights outcomes including increased motivation, stronger collaboration toward departmental goals, and improved student employee retention. Attendees will leave with practical strategies, structures, and processes, including examples of TEMC's student worker organizational chart, performance appraisal process, and professional development activities, that can be applied to their own student employee programs.

Building a Better Testing Center to Improve the Student Experience & Outcomes

Room: A08 + A09

James Sbarboro, Oakton College

Student testers face many challenges and competing forces for their time and attention in a rapidly changing, increasingly remote world. Low graduation, low retention rates and student separation from campus prompt asking how academic testing centers can improve the student experience and outcomes? Strategies include NCTA best

practices, reducing test anxiety, excellent operations and customer service, connecting students to the physical campus, and proactive learning resource support. Take a journey with me as we tour Oakton College's new versatile testing facility built to meet students' diverse testing needs and what we are doing to help students soar to new heights.

Concurrent Sessions 2
Tuesday, September 15, 2026 | 2:45 PM - 3:45 PM

The Human Firewall: Strengthening Test Centers Against Social Engineering

Room: Meeting Room 01

Sara Rieder Bennett, University of Akron

Paul Morales, Honorlock

What if the key to a secure testing environment lies in understanding human behavior rather than just enforcing rules? While technical safeguards are essential, the human element is often the most critical factor in maintaining integrity. Experts will explore the psychology of social engineering, how students rationalize policy deviations, and the challenges staff face in identifying and responding to violations. They will introduce "Human Firewall" threat modeling to help you develop supportive, effective defenses.

Key Takeaways:

- Recognize subtle social engineering tactics used in test centers*
- Understand the psychological motivations behind security lapses*
- Implement techniques to identify, prevent, and respond to social engineering*

Do Test Scores vary by Proctor Mode?: A Follow up Study

Room: Meeting Room 02

Cindy James, Thompson Rivers University

In 2021 a study comparing the entry assessment scores of candidates testing in-person versus online was conducted at a public, open access university. The results revealed no significant differences in scores by proctor mode on three English exams and two out of three mathematics exams. In 2025 a follow up study was conducted in which entrance test scores were again compared, but the predictive validity of these test scores by proctor mode were also investigated. During this session, the methods, results, possible explanations and implications of the findings from this study will be presented.

The New NCTA Digest: Bringing the Camaraderie We Feel at Conference into a Digital Newsletter

Room: Meeting Room 03

Eric Jensen, Utah State University

The new NCTA Digest has launched with the goal of providing a venue for discussion and publication of all things testing, less formal than the NCTA Journal but more focused, reviewed, and "entertaining" than the NCTA Listserv. This session will

introduce and promote the new Digest with a view of its mission, a guide to submitting, and a brainstorming session for potential topics, sections, or features. From shared "war stories," to tips for best practices and center setup, and even on to humor and encouragement, help us shape the Digest into a digital symposium which brings us closer together, more often.

Serving Those Who Serve: Designing Military-Friendly Testing Programs with CLEP

Room: A02

Cheryl Wieser, Bossier Parish Community College

Shakila Farmer, College Board

Military-connected students often encounter challenges related to mobility, time constraints, and complex institutional testing policies. CLEP provides a standardized, nationally recognized assessment that supports academic rigor, consistency, and secure test administration. This session will examine how testing professionals can design and manage military-friendly testing programs using CLEP within established compliance and governance frameworks. Participants will explore policy alignment, operational practices, and cross-functional coordination strategies that promote equitable access, maintain assessment integrity, and support institutional accountability while serving service members, veterans, and military families.

Building Better Testing Centers: Construction, Relocation, and Renovation Lessons from the Field

Room: A03

Donna Rodriguez, Victoria College

Dr. Larry Chapa, Texas State University

Designing or relocating a testing center requires careful planning to ensure operational efficiency, test security, accessibility, and scalability. This panel brings together testing professionals from two-year colleges, multi-campus institutions, and national testing providers to share lessons learned during construction, renovation, and relocation projects. Panelists will discuss both successful planning strategies and real-world challenges encountered when testing professionals were not included in the design process. Topics include space planning, IT infrastructure, security requirements, budgeting realities, and stakeholder coordination. Attendees will gain actionable strategies to avoid common pitfalls and create secure, student-centered testing environments.

Giant Meteor 2026: Preparing for the Worst in a World of AI

Room: A08 + A09

Jennifer Kepka, Lane Community College

This will be a fact-filled but lighthearted discussion that tackles the twin engines of doom and despair for testing centers: rapidly advancing technology making proctoring more important than ever, while rapidly advancing technology offers to proctor more exams.

Attendees will leave with inexpensive techniques academic testing centers can use to encourage both students and faculty to understand the limits and opportunities of human-proctored testing, including: Partnering with faculty to encourage authentic assessment; tips for communicating with students about ID and physical device restrictions (smartglasses, watches, earpods, etc.); and visions of the future (AI students taking AI-proctored exams, anyone?).

**Sponsor Workshop Sessions -
Wednesday, September 16, 2026 | 9:45 AM - 10:45 AM**

TBD

Room: Meeting Room 01

TBD

Room: Meeting Room 02

TBD

Room: Meeting Room 03

TBD

Room: A02

**Concurrent Sessions 3
Wednesday, September 16, 2026 | 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

NCTA Test Certification Session

Room: Meeting Room 01

Francine Feero, University of Alaska-Anchorage

Jessica Yung, Waubonsee Community College

Partnering with ACCUPLACER to offer Career and Workforce Readiness testing

Room: Meeting Room 02

Cindy James, Thompson Rivers University

Kathie Montognese, College Board - ACCUPLACER

Recently, a partnership between the TRU Assessment Centre and ACCUPLACER was forged to facilitate career and workforce skills assessments for various employers.

Together they established a suitable process and mechanism for interpreting ACCUPLACER scores for workplace environments. For the latter, ACCUPLACER created Career and Workplace Training Readiness Skills Insights which help identify the

entry-level skills required for specific occupations that meet both learner needs and employer expectations. By attending this presentation, participants should gain practical strategies for exploring models for collaborating with employers and for using the ACCUPLACER Skills Insight Statements to support workforce alignment.

From Spreadsheets to Systems: Getting Started with Testing Center Data

Room: Meeting Room 03

Michelle Rogers-Johnson, Old Dominion University

This session explores how a medical and health professions testing center moved from Excel spreadsheets to a systems approach to supporting effective, data-informed operations. The presenter will share their process for defining meaningful metrics, standardizing data collection, and developing clear reporting practices. Through this case study, participants will see how everyday data can inform decisions about staffing, scheduling, accommodations, budgeting, and the overall effectiveness.

"It's not just me, right?" A conversation about accommodated testing; Navigating Accommodated Testing - lessons learned and questions posed

Room: A02

Tamara Sprague, Oregon State University

Carina Carpenter, Northwestern University

Melanie Marine, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

Sometimes we feel like we are all alone in the challenges we face. We will present solutions that have worked for us and hold an open forum to discuss challenges and solutions to accommodate testing. Come prepared to listen & share insights from your institution and your colleagues.

Leave Work at Work

Room: A03

Tammy Jones, Dallas College

Cherry Williams, Auburn University

Leave Work at Work is a practical, empowering session focused on strengthening self-care and achieving a healthier work-life balance. This presentation explores why self-care is essential to your emotional, physical, and mental well-being, and how creating boundaries between work and personal life can dramatically improve overall quality of living. Participants will learn the value of truly leaving work at work, resisting the urge to carry tasks, stress, or unfinished business home. By doing so, you open up space to be fully present with family and friends, nurture your marriage or personal relationships, and invest time in yourself. This session also highlights how maintaining balance supports healthier habits, such as having the time and energy to exercise, prepare nutritious meals, and avoid relying on fast food due to late work hours. Ultimately, Leave Work at Work encourages intentional routines that support health, happiness, and long-term success both inside and outside the workplace.

Security vs. Access: Managing Mobile Dependent Medical Accommodations in Testing Centers

Room: A08 + A09

Jarret Dyer, College of DuPage

Kelli Kerns, College of DuPage

As medical devices increasingly connect to mobile phones, testing centers face a growing challenge: how to maintain rigorous test security while honoring required disability accommodations. This session examines the complexities proctors encounter when mobile phones (typically prohibited) are essential for managing health related devices. We will explore emerging risks, practical security strategies, documentation considerations, and communication approaches that balance ADA obligations with exam integrity standards. Attendees will gain actionable insights for developing policies that protect both secure testing environments and equitable access for students who rely on connected medical technologies.

Keynote Presentation

Wednesday, September 15, 2026 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

Managing Test Anxiety in High-Stakes Settings: Recognizing Symptoms, Understanding Stress, and Applying Grounding Strategies

Presented by: **Dr. Bitá Ashouri Rivas**, California State University-Sacramento

Room: Ballroom A01

This presentation explores the presentation of anxiety symptoms in testing environments, with particular attention to test anxiety in high-stakes examinations. Attendees will examine how anxiety manifests cognitively, emotionally, behaviorally, and physically, while also gaining an overview of the neurobiological and neuroendocrine stress response that can interfere with performance. The session will provide practical, evidence-informed strategies to help students prepare for exams, regulate distress, and use grounding techniques before and during testing. In addition, examiners will learn de-escalation and grounding approaches that can support examinees while maintaining the structure and integrity of the testing process. The presentation will conclude with recommendations for exam preparation and an interactive practice activity to help participants apply key skills in real-world testing contexts.

Concurrent Sessions 4

Wednesday, September 15, 2026 | 1:45 PM - 2:45 PM

Clarity Over Confusion: Communicating Testing Policies Students Will Actually Read

Room: Meeting Room 01

Sandra Brasch, University Testing Center-University of Central Florida

Testing policies are critical for compliance and test integrity, but unclear communication often leads to student frustration, staff conflict, and preventable incidents. This session focuses on translating testing policies into clear, student focused communication without sacrificing accuracy or security. Participants will learn a practical “policy translation” framework for simplifying language, structuring web content, and reinforcing expectations through confirmation emails, signage, and FAQs. Drawing on extensive experience in communications and student facing messaging, the presenter will share techniques that reduce repeat questions and front desk challenges. Attendees will leave with tools to improve clarity, strengthen compliance, and create smoother test day experiences.

Shared Space, Shared Success: Collaboration in Accommodated Testing

Room: Meeting Room 02

Ashley Szymczak, University of Notre Dame

This presentation explores the unique dynamics of a university testing center that focuses solely on accommodated testing and shares office space with the Accessibility Department. We’ll discuss the challenges of operating in a shared space, from scheduling conflicts to communication hurdles, and how these can impact daily operations. At the same time, we’ll highlight the benefits, including enhanced collaboration, instant access to resources, and a deeper understanding of student needs. Attendees will gain insights into balancing practical limitations with collaborative opportunities and learn strategies to make shared spaces a place of efficiency, support, and mutual success.

SIG Coffee Date: Online Learning & Equity and Access

Room: Meeting Room 03

Alejandro Martinez, Texas A&M International University

Tamara Sprague, Oregon State University

Rina Carpenter, Northwestern University

This joint SIG Coffee Date brings together members of the Online Learning and Equity and Access communities for an open, participant-driven discussion on virtual assessment and equitable testing practices. Attendees are encouraged to bring questions, challenges, and scenarios related to online exam delivery, proctoring, and accessibility. The conversation will focus on shared experiences, practical solutions, and peer-to-peer learning across a variety of testing environments. This session is open to all NCTA professionals and provides a collaborative space to exchange ideas, gain insights, and learn from one another.

NCTA Certification Drop-In Hours

Room: A02

Operating Through the Lens of Psychometrics: The Secret Sauce Behind Everyday Testing Decisions

Room: A03

Jim Wollack, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Sonya Sedivy, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Though it may not seem obvious, nearly all testing-related decisions and policies can be framed as psychometric or validity issues. At its core, validity is about test scores-what they mean and how they are used. Testing offices have potential to play an important role on campus in helping to promote valid testing practices. In this session, we will provide insights into ways to use psychometrics to inform decision making and will share information that your office can use to position itself as an invaluable voice in making decisions and setting policy around testing.

Beyond the Panic: Engineering a "Secure by Design" Testing Environment

Room: A08 + A09

Rachel Watkins Schoenig, Cornerstone Strategies, LLC

Jarret Dyer, College of DuPage

Paul Morales, Honorlock

Is your testing environment proactively secure by design or reactive by necessity? This interactive session moves beyond "AI panic" to focus on robust architectural integrity. Experts will explore how to build a "Secure by Design" environment that addresses emerging threats through both policy and physical security measures. They will demonstrate new technology capabilities, such as thermal imaging, to identify hidden devices and address the rise of smart wearables.

Key Takeaways:

- Draft resilient student policies that address exam validity*
- Implement advanced physical protocols, from sleeve checks to signal detection*
- Integrate emerging technologies to future-proof test center architecture*

Concurrent Sessions 5

Wednesday, September 16, 2026 | 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

SIG Coffee Date: Emergency Planning and Management

Room: Meeting Room 01

Eddy Ray Presley, Bossier Parish Community College

Donna Rodriguez, Victoria College

Emily Camp, Auburn University

Group Discussion on best Practices for Emergency Planning and Management topics for Testing Centers.

Ensuring Equitable Access: Accommodations for ACCUPLACER and CLEP

Room: Meeting Room 02

Ann Tabang, College Board

Brett Felder, College Board

ACCUPLACER and CLEP play an important role in expanding opportunity-helping students demonstrate readiness and earn credit toward their goals. Ensuring that every student can fully access these assessments is essential. This joint session will provide practical guidance and clarity on delivering accommodations effectively, confidently, and in alignment with program standards. In this session, participants will:

- *Explore Accommodation Options: Review available accommodations for both ACCUPLACER and CLEP, including extended time, assistive technology, alternative formats, and other approved supports*
- *Understand Policies and Processes: Gain clarity on documentation requirements, approval workflows, and key similarities and differences between the two programs*
- *Apply Best Practices: Learn strategies for implementing accommodations while preserving test integrity and maintaining a smooth student experience*
- *Engage in Interactive Q&A: Bring your questions and scenarios for expert guidance on supporting students with diverse and unique needs*
- *Access Practical Resources: Leave with tools, reference materials, and implementation tips to support your campus processes.*

By the end of this session, you will be better prepared to deliver equitable testing experiences across both ACCUPLACER and CLEP--ensuring every student has a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and move forward with confidence.

Data-Driven Advocacy for Academic Support

Room: Meeting Room 03

Carrie Solomon, Binghamton University - SUNY

Testing Centers often struggle to translate massive datasets into administrative support. This session leverages "Storytelling with Data" frameworks to help professionals move beyond spreadsheets and create compelling narratives for campus leadership. Participants will learn to identify key performance indicators that resonate with administration, visualize complex data for maximum impact, and bridge the gap between operational metrics and institutional goals. By mastering the art of the "data story," you can effectively advocate for increased funding, expanded space, and additional staffing, ensuring your academic support services are recognized as vital, high-impact institutional assets.

NCTA Certification Drop-In Hours

Room: A02

Cornerstones of Trust: Elevating Testing Centers Through Data, Partnerships, and Proactive Practice

Room: A03

Lisa Macaruso, University of Rhode Island

This interactive workshop engages professionals at any stage of testing center development who want practical strategies to strengthen their operations. Through case examples, participants will explore how one institution leveraged testing center data and campus partnerships to build trust, secure resources, and align with institutional priorities. Guided discussion will invite attendees to reflect on recent student and faculty interactions, identify opportunities for professional development and microcredentials, and consider how their teams can brand their expertise to established relationships that elevate proctoring practices and position testing centers as essential campus partners.

Dearest Gentle Test Taker

Room: A08 + A09

Rachel Schoenig, Cornerstone Strategies, LLC

Faisal Alam, Law School Admission Council

Brittany Thornton, Law School Admission Council

James Wollack, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Testing season is upon us, and not surprisingly, test takers may experience a range of emotions, from hope to anxiety to frustration. This session will unpack the ways test taker communications can help de-escalate tensions and better prepare test takers for their exam. Using research-backed methods, we will explore the various touchpoints test centers, educators, and testing programs can leverage to encourage preparation and honest testing behavior. Attendees will leave this interactive and engaging session with concrete suggestions for approaching the testing season to make it as stress-free as possible for test takers and testing staff.

Concurrent Sessions 6

Thursday, September 17, 2026 | 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Putting the Me in Mentor: How the NCTA Mentorship Program Turns Personal Growth into Professional Power

Room: Meeting Room 01

Lisa Macaruso, University of Rhode Island

Melanie Marine, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

Carrie Solomon, Binghamton University-SUNY

This session introduces the NCTA Mentorship Program and demonstrates how applying adult learning theories can strengthen professional growth in testing centers. Participants will explore how andragogical principles position mentees as self-directed learners who draw on prior experience, pursue timely skill development, and engage in

problem-centered learning. Mentors, in turn, serve as facilitators who guide-not direct-the learning process. Attendees will also begin applying these concepts by working through a real-time challenge from their own centers, gaining practical insight into how mentorship can build capacity, deepen expertise, and support sustainable professional development.

Security vs. Access: Managing Mobile Dependent Medical Accommodations in Testing Centers

Room: Meeting Room 02

Jarret Dyer, College of DuPage

Kelli Kerns, College of DuPage

As medical devices increasingly connect to mobile phones, testing centers face a growing challenge: how to maintain rigorous test security while honoring required disability accommodations. This session examines the complexities proctors encounter when mobile phones-typically prohibited-are essential for managing health related devices. We will explore emerging risks, practical security strategies, documentation considerations, and communication approaches that balance ADA obligations with exam integrity standards. Attendees will gain actionable insights for developing policies that protect both secure testing environments and equitable access for students who rely on connected medical technologies.

Let's Be Scrappy: Rebuilding testing center systems from scratch

Room: Meeting Room 03

Jennifer Kepka, Lane Community College

Post-pandemic, we had to rebuild testing staff, systems, schedules, and procedures from scratch after a 2-year closure -- with extremely limited budget. This presentation provides examples of low-cost systems that can help set up a testing center nearly anywhere you have a couple of networked computers, willing staff, and a bit of peace and quiet!

Revisiting Boundaries

Room: A02

Helen Richardson, University of Kentucky

Lindsay Jansen, University of Kentucky

When do you hold your ground? When is it too much, just enough, or when is it uncalled for? We've all been there. Through others' experiences and boundaries, let's learn and reassure ourselves together! We will discuss personal, as well as professional boundaries. Setting boundaries for the testers, the proctors, the staff, the instructors, the campus, your process, your guidelines, and yourself can be so hard. But when is it called for and when is it not? Let's learn and grow together. It doesn't matter if your center is big or small, or if you are new or a veteran in your position- we all need a dose of a helping hand and reassurance. Join in, in setting boundaries!

Running Accommodated Testing with Intention: Staffing, Systems, and Leadership

Room: A03

Lindsay Jansen, University of Kentucky

Kelsey Jordan, Purdue University

Alan Dixon-Hurd, California State University-Sacramento

Accommodated testing is one of the most complex areas of testing center operations. Managers are expected to scale services, support diverse student needs, and maintain compliance while keeping daily operations running smoothly. This manager-focused session shares practical strategies for leading accommodated testing programs through real-world examples, student testimonials, and guided discussion. Topics include staffing considerations, communication tools, prioritization, and organizational systems that support high-volume testing. Designed with extensive Q&A, attendees will have the opportunity to discuss challenges and “pick our brains.” Participants will leave with concrete takeaways, including access to downloadable templates and tools via a shared Google Drive.

Gen Z Management: Picking Your Proctor

Room: A07

James Rodeback II, East Tennessee State University

This session hopes to explore how intentional proctor selection can reduce operational risk and improve testing center performance, as well as how a young leadership team can effectively manage a team of individuals nearly the same age as they are. What we inherited were issues with proctors being disinterested, not committed to the mission, conflict avoidant, and not serving as supervisors to our receptionists. When looking over hundreds of applications for our proctor positions, we kept reminding ourselves that not all people are suited for high-stakes, examinee-facing authority roles, and that a poor fit creates risk that no amount of training can fully fix. We stepped away from a traditional management role and prioritized collaboration over authority – creating an environment in which proctors are passionate about their roles. Our finding reinforced that effective proctor selection must prioritize judgment, professionalism, interpersonal skill, and strong availability amidst student workers’ schooling and personal obligations. Specifically, we began looking for observable traits such as confidence, body language, empathy, communication ability, and overall personable skills. These characteristics became central to our selection process, as they directly impact a proctor’s ability to manage testing rooms, communicate expectations, and respond appropriately to examinee stress. What we found was that individuals with psychology, counseling, and business backgrounds tend to do well in positions like this. They are generally used to uncomfortable conversations, do not personalize examinee frustration, can say no calmly and clearly, and can provide anxiety easement. These individuals understand that empathy and enforcement are not opposites. At the end of our semester, we were able to look at the specifically selected proctors to determine if our hypotheses were

true. We found that with proctors who are well-matched to the role, not only does testing run more smoothly, but supervisors spend less time coaching on the floor and more time focusing on operational growth. We were allowed more bandwidth to reflect on our testing center metrics, create a more optimal daily workflow, and make strategic decisions that align with our universities best practices to optimize the undergraduate student experiences and culture.

Solo, Not Superhuman: Work-Life Balance

Room: A08 + A09

Ashley Szymczak, University of Notre Dame

What does work-life balance really look like when you are the only full-time staff member in a testing center that relies entirely on student employees? This session explores the realities of leading, supervising, troubleshooting, and supporting students—often all at once. I'll share honest reflections on what has worked, what hasn't, and the boundaries I'm still learning to set. Together, we'll discuss practical strategies for managing availability, delegating effectively, preventing burnout, and protecting personal time in high-demand environments. This conversation is not about perfection, but about progress, sustainability, and building healthier rhythms in roles that rarely slow down.

Concurrent Sessions 7

Thursday, September 17, 2026 | 10:45 AM - 11:45 AM

NCTA Grants Program: Let Us Help Take the \$ting Out of Funding Your Next NCTA-Sponsored Event or Project!

Room: Meeting Room 01

Rebecca Peity, University of Central Florida

Marc Louchez, Georgia State University

The purpose of the NCTA Grants Program is to offer opportunities for professional development, to promote the development of resources for NCTA members, to encourage professional support activities, to stimulate research pertinent to the field of testing, and to support the testing profession. Whether you're launching a new project, conducting research, or seeking funding support for a professional development workshop or mini conference, don't miss this opportunity to learn how the NCTA Grants Program can provide funding support to optimize your innovative ideas into successful initiatives that will make a difference in the field of testing and assessment.

Beyond Extended Time: Integrating Executive Functioning Support into the University Accommodated Testing Environment

Room: Meeting Room 02

Liz Wright, University of Cincinnati Testing Services

Martin Hintz, University of Cincinnati Testing Services

University testing centers typically focus on compliance-based accommodations such as extended time and reduced-distraction spaces. However, many students who receive testing accommodations also experience executive functioning challenges that impact preparation, regulation, and performance. This session presents a scalable model for embedding executive functioning supports directly into accommodated testing operations without expanding beyond ADA boundaries. Participants will learn how structured scheduling, test-day regulation protocols, and post-exam reflection tools can reduce cognitive load, improve first-attempt success, and strengthen retention outcomes. Practical implementation strategies and measurable impact indicators will be provided.

Strengthening Student Pathways Through CLEP: An Approach to PLA Collaboration

Room: Meeting Room 03

Nathalie Quarles, Tarrant County College – Southeast Campus

Shakila Farmer, College Board

This session highlights how a community college test center expands student access to Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), with a focus on CLEP. It outlines collaboration among Student Affairs, academic departments, district offices, and the transfer center to support alternative credit pathways. Presenters will explain the CLEP credit approval process, including faculty review, validity studies, and score evaluation. The session will also cover outreach strategies-orientation materials, classroom visits, and high-traffic engagement-to increase student awareness. Participants will gain practical approaches to strengthening PLA processes, advising, and supporting degree completion and transfer success.

Strengthening Assessment Infrastructure: A Model for Consolidating Distance Education Testing and Accommodated Testing Services

Room: A02

Thomas Martin, North Carolina State University

Sharon Broere, North Carolina State University

Institutions are under pressure to deliver flexible, secure, and inclusive assessments, yet many still separate academic and accommodated testing. This siloed approach creates inefficiencies, inconsistent practices, and uneven student experiences. This session introduces a scalable, student-centered model for unifying testing operations into a single coordinated unit. Drawing from real implementation outcomes, we'll share practical strategies for aligning policies, streamlining workflows, training staff, and maintaining compliance. Attendees will learn how integrated testing services reduce conflict, strengthen exam security, improve efficiency, and create a more seamless, equitable testing experience for all students.

They Cheated, Now What? Building a Culture of Academic Integrity

Room: A03

Andrea Burton, University of Arkansas – Fort Smith

After a sharp increase in the number of students caught attempting to cheat on academic exams, the team at the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith Academic Success Center knew that the usual phone calls and emails to the faculty were not enough. The idea of tracking infractions in a centralized database was a good start, but after being challenged by leadership to think bigger, the Lion Pride Academic Integrity Campaign was formed. In coordination with other student support areas across campus, the campaign is designed to promote the values of academic integrity rather than just tracking the cheaters.

Being Proctor-active about the Future: Insights from a Test Center Community

Room: A07

Mandy Giust, Surpass Assessment

Ceri Harper, Surpass Assessment

Jarret Dyer, Surpass Assessment

You asked us to listen to the test center community's pain points, and we did! This session shares practical insights from conversations with a community network of test center professionals across the country, offering immediate, actionable takeaways and longer-term strategies for improvement. Hear directly from this community as they reveal how their input has already shaped enhancements to staff training, strengthened security protocols, and informed operational strategies that better reflect the realities of test center work. Join us for an interactive panel discussion where testing professionals openly share their challenges and experiences. Come ready to listen, contribute, and help shape a collective vision for the future of test centers.

Leveling Up: Developing Professionals, Not Just Proctors

Room: A08 + A09

Margaret Thomas, Seminole State College of Florida

Rebecca Peity, University of Central Florida

If professional development were a game, are your team members stuck in tutorial mode or advancing through new quests? This session explores leadership strategies for educating and empowering testing center staff through intentional professional development. Together, we'll identify growth opportunities, explore skill-building strategies, and discuss how technology platforms can optimize training and more effectively engage your "players". Participants will walk away with fresh insights and actionable strategies to help their teams unlock new skills and level up their professional development game.

Concurrent Sessions 8

Thursday, September 17, 2026 | 1:45 PM - 2:45 PM

From Policy to Practice: Simple, Scalable Test Security for Busy Testing Centers

Room: Meeting Room 01

Sue Schmitz, College Board

Donna Rodriguez, Victoria College

Testing centers face rising expectations for security while preserving a calm, student-centered experience. This session shares a practical “minimum viable” integrity approach that reduces risk without adding stress. Participants learn a layered, in-person model-before test day, during check-in/testing, and after-session review-to strengthen accountability. Through realistic scenarios (ID concerns, prohibited items, suspicious behavior, tech glitches, and policy misunderstandings) and a simple stoplight decision guide, staff practice consistent, fair responses. Attendees leave with ready-to-use controls, an incident-response workflow, and coaching scripts to support teams-especially new proctors-so policies are applied clearly, respectfully, and equitably, even in newer or non-certified centers.

Expanding Educational Access in Corrections

Room: Meeting Room 02

Kathie Montognese, College Board

Belinda Wheeler, College Board

Higher education in prison improves lives, strengthens families, and supports successful reentry-yet demand for Prison Education Programs (PEPs) far exceeds available seats. In addition, many incarcerated individuals without a high school diploma or GED are often excluded from college pathways. This session highlights immediate, scalable solutions. Through CLEP, learners can prepare with free courses from Modern States and earn college credit at no cost, creating momentum toward a degree. ACCUPLACER also serves as an approved Ability-to-Benefit assessment, opening access to federal financial aid, including Pell Grants, for eligible students without a diploma or GED. College Board representatives will share practical strategies for implementing these options in correctional settings, expanding access and creating meaningful pathways to college for incarcerated learners.

Damn It Dave! Why knowledge management matters

Room: Meeting Room 03

Liz Wulbrecht, Anne Arundel Community College

In February 2020, an integral member of the Testing Center team was unexpectedly lost. Years of accumulated knowledge and specialty skills that kept the center running smoothly vanished in the blink of an eye. Just three weeks later as we were attempting to right our testing sphere, the world shut down in the face of a global pandemic; once again upending our team and leaving us desperately in need of the specialty knowledge and skill we had lost. Join me as I share our cautionary tale of tragedy, triumphs and the lessons learned about knowledge management.

Secure Excel Testing: Integrating ExPrep with LockDown Browser and Canvas at the Keon Testing Center

Room: A02

Aaron Smart, University of Central Florida

The Keon Testing Center at the University of Central Florida's College of Business has successfully implemented ExPrep, an automated Excel grading platform, to deliver secure Microsoft Excel assessments in a controlled, proctored environment using Respondus LockDown Browser. This presentation will detail our innovative integration: deploying customized ExPrep exams within LockDown Browser to prevent unauthorized access, ensure academic integrity, and enable precise, automated grading of complex spreadsheet tasks. Key outcomes include reduced manual grading time, immediate student feedback, enhanced exam security in a physical testing center, and improved learning outcomes for business students. Attendees will gain practical insights into setup, challenges overcome (e.g., compatibility and proctoring protocols), and scalable best practices for high-stakes Excel certification and course testing.

From Decision to Day One: Managing a Large-Scale Test Platform Transition

Room: A03

April Imhoff, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale

Lindsay Perry, College Board

Moving to a new test platform impacts far more than technology-it affects staff workflows, confidence, and the student testing experience. In this session, April Imhoff (Southern Illinois University-Carbondale) and Lindsay Perry (College Board) share a practical, campus-centered look at managing a large-scale test platform transition from initial decision to day-one launch. The presentation focuses on communication strategies, training approaches, and management practices that supported adoption across campus, as well as lessons learned when plans needed adjustment. Attendees will leave with realistic strategies for guiding staff through system change while maintaining operational continuity.

Customer Service in a Social Media World

Room: A07

Dr. Paris Sepulveda Smith, Cleveland Educational Services, Inc.

Customer service has evolved dramatically in the age of social media, where every interaction can influence public perception in real time. This session explores strategies for delivering responsive, authentic, and brand-aligned service across digital platforms. Participants will learn how to manage public feedback, handle complaints transparently, turn negative interactions into positive brand moments, and leverage social listening to improve customer experience. We will also examine response time expectations, crisis management basics, and tools for measuring engagement and satisfaction in a highly visible, fast-paced social environment.

Suit Up for the Win at Finals

Room: A08 + A09

Lisa Holben, University of Mississippi

Jinny Hurdle, University of Mississippi

Final Exams Week, a.k.a. the Super Bowl of academic testing! Whether you're relatively new to the sport (a rookie), or a seasoned veteran, you likely have a favorite trick play or an epic fumble to share. The goal of this session will be to huddle up in small groups and tackle the issues together: Recruiting for your roster, Handling delay of game issues, Last-minute substitutions, Lining up your offense, and Strengthening your defense. Come ready to team up, score some new insights, and walk away a winner!

Concurrent Sessions 9

Thursday, September 17, 2026 | 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Using CLEP as a Bridge, Not a Barrier: An Equity-Centered Partnership Model for Testing Centers

Room: Meeting Room 02

Amanda Laguardia, Boise State University

Oster Hernandez, College of Western Idaho

This session presents a replicable partnership model using CLEP language exams to expand college access for multilingual high school students. Through collaboration between a university testing center, a community college, and regional high schools, the program removes cost barriers, affirms existing knowledge, and delivers cohort-based CLEP testing within a supportive campus experience. Presenters will discuss program design, funding structures, staffing and scheduling logistics, outcome data, and sustainability considerations. Attendees will leave with a practical framework for leveraging assessment as an equity-centered entry point to higher education within their own testing centers.

From Silos to Synergy: Building a State-Wide Professional Network

Room: Meeting Room 03

Carrie Solomon, Binghamton University

While NCTA provides a national foundation, local challenges often require regional solutions. This session outlines the blueprint used to establish "SUNY STAMP," a state-wide professional network for testing and assessment management. We will discuss the strategic steps of building a community from the ground up, from identifying key stakeholders to establishing sustainable organizational structures. Participants will learn how state-level networks can facilitate resource sharing, provide localized professional development, and create a unified voice for advocacy within their specific higher

education systems. Discover how to transition from individual silos to a synergetic regional community.

Running a Testing Center Like a Business: Financial Management in Auxiliary-Funded Units

Room: A02

Sandra Brasch, University Testing Center-University of Central Florida

Many college testing centers operate as auxiliary funded units, and testing professionals are often asked to manage budgets without formal financial training. This session demystifies essential financial concepts for testing administrators, including budgeting basics, demand forecasting, cash flow, and cost-benefit decision making. Participants will explore practical tools for aligning staffing, supplies, and services with fluctuating testing volume while maintaining access and integrity. The session also addresses how to evaluate new opportunities, plan for equipment replacement, and communicate financial needs effectively to leadership. Attendees will leave with confidence and templates for making informed, sustainable financial decisions.

#BestTeamEver

Room: A03

Liz Wulbrecht, Anne Arundel Community College

Over the past 10 years, I've worked diligently to build and sculpt the #BestTeamEver through strategic hiring, training, and team building. In this session I'll share my best tips and tricks (including my favorite interview questions!) and invite group discussion on challenges and problem solving.

Using Multiple Measures for Writing Placement: A Practical Institutional Approach

Room: A08 + A09

Christina Newlands, Rowan University

This presentation highlights Rowan University, a four-year public institution in Southern New Jersey, and its use of a Multiple Measures Assessment (MMA) model for first-year writing placement as an alternative to standardized testing. Drawing on four years of institutional data, the session examines placement completion trends, student self-placement decisions, and early academic outcomes associated with a guided self-placement approach. The presenter will discuss the design and administration of the Writing Placement Test, cross-campus collaboration, and data-informed refinements made over time. Attendees will gain practical insights into evaluating and sustaining equitable, student-centered writing placement practices.

Capnote

Thursday, September 17, 2026 | 4:15 PM – 5:30 PM

Lessons Learned from Decades of Experience in the Assessment Field

Cindy James, Thompson Rivers University

Sara Rieder Bennett, University of Akron

Jim Wollack, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Jarret Dyer, College of DuPage

Room: Ballroom A01

In this session, a panel of professionals from across North America will share some of the most valuable lessons they learned from over 75 years of combined experience in the assessment field. Topics related to academic integrity, change management, networking and professional acumen will be the focus of the panel discussion. Besides gaining valuable insights into the assessment field, the audience also will be given an opportunity to "Ask the Expert", time permitting.