

The CCSD Dispatch

College Counseling & Student Development Master's Program
Fall 2022 Newsletter



Photo of CCSD students at MC's Dugout for a Fall 2022 social, hosted by Dr. Aerial A. Ashlee.

Another Full Fall Semester!

Fall 2022 proved to be another full semester for CCSD. Continuing our multi-year partnership with the SCSU Academic Collegiate Excellence (ACE) program, **second-year CCSD students facilitated a three-part Community, Identity, and Positionality workshop series for +140 first-year students** enrolled in COLL 150: Discovering the College Experience.

In October, as part of **Careers in Student Affairs Month**, CCSD offered several professional development opportunities for students, alumni, and campus partners including a collaborative program with SCSU's Division of Student Affairs on **Addressing Compassion Fatigue & Burnout: Fostering a Campus Culture of Community Care**, a workshop on **Demystifying Student Affairs Conferencing**, and a **Helping Careers Graduate School Open House** for undergraduate SCSU students considering future careers in helping professions.

In November, CCSD was well represented at the **NASPA IV-W/E Joint Regional Conference** in Chicago, IL. We had current students, alumni, and faculty present conference sessions, be recognized as grant and award recipients, and represent the great state of Minnesota! Last, but certainly not least, we welcomed **Dr. Katrina Rodriguez** (SCSU Vice President for Student Affairs) and **Tim Meendering** (CCSD Class of 2007 and SCSU Registrar) to the **CCSD Advisory Council**. A special shout-out to all of our past and present Advisory Council members for your service and commitment to CCSD. Have a great winter break, everyone!

In community,
Dr. Aerial A. Ashlee, CCSD Graduate Director

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Meet the 1st Year Cohort!

We thought it might be fun to play **2 truths & a lie** as a way to introduce this year's new cohort. Keep reading to learn more about our newest CCSD students. Try to guess which two statements are true and which is the lie for each person.



Kaia Swenson (she/her)

Hometown: Brainerd,
Minnesota, USA

- A) I've ran 3 half-marathons.
- B) I studied abroad in Europe as an undergraduate student.
- C) I'm a flexitarian.



Chelsie Chang (she/her)

Hometown: St. Paul,
Minnesota, USA

- A) I have a yorkie named Zuko.
- B) I was in a hurricane.
- C) I have a baby brother that is 15 years younger than me.



Afolarera Onitiju (she/her)

Hometown: Lagos,
Nigeria

- A) I can speak 3 languages.
- B) My favorite food of all time is spaghetti.
- C) I love the smell of wine.



Lateefat Faluse (she/her)

Hometown: Ekiti,
Nigeria

- A) I love success stories.
- B) I love being in a serene space.
- C) I own a pet.



Heather Mueller (she/her)

Hometown: Lasalle,
Colorado, USA

- A) I was an owner of a paint-your-own-pottery studio.
- B) I love to dance.
- C) I have 5 children.

Answer Key: Kaia's lie = B, Chelsie's lie = C, Afolarera's lie = C, Lateefat's lie = A, Lateefat's lie = C, Heather's lie = C

CCSD Student Org Updates

By: **Maigos Nguyen, 2nd year CCSD student**, and Vice President of CCSD Student Org

The CCSD student organization is excited to share some highlights from the year. The mission of the CCSD student org this year was to **build community** within our program. In the short time of our service to one another, we have **created two new leadership positions**: **Yu Juin Kuan, 2nd year CCSD student**, is our **Events Coordinator** and **Yee Ba Lee, 2nd year CCSD student**, is our **Creative Project Management Coordinator**. Yu Juin has provided great insights and contributed ideas to enhance the CCSD community. Yee Ba has lent his expertise (10 years of experience at SCSU) and provided his graphic designing skills to our events. We are happy to welcome them both as board members of the CCSD organization.

Additionally, one of our board members **Willie Ng, 2nd year CCSD student**, had the opportunity to attend the **2022 NAFSA Annual Conference & Expo** in Denver, CO. He found the experience to be informative and valuable as an emerging student affairs practitioner in international education. The social networking and partnership exchange gained from conferences like this are crucial in our **professional development** as future student affairs practitioners.

Early in the fall semester, the CCSD student org coordinated a happy hour at MC's Dugout for the first and second-year cohorts to get to know each other. In October, we invited everyone to go to the Renaissance Festival to enjoy the last few warm days of fall weather. **CCSD student org President Sabrina Yang** got to experience the Renaissance Festival for the first time! In November, a couple of our CCSD members attended the 2022 NASPA IV-West/East Joint Regional Conference in Chicago, IL. One of our members, **2nd year CCSD student Silena Xiong** was recognized as the Minnesota State Graduate Student Rising Star.

Although it has been a challenge to find community with one another due to everyone's busy and different schedules, we were able to connect through SCSU Graduate Studies events and through efforts by Dr. Aerial A. Ashlee to find ways to connect us all (like facilitating StarPower with all current students, and hosting a fall social at MC's Dugout). We look forward to next semester and passing the torch on to the first-year cohort!



Photos from CCSD Student Organization programming in fall 2022.

CCSD Alum Spotlight

An interview with Michelle Schmitz (CCSD Class of 2005),
Executive Director, Career Center, St. Cloud State University

CCSD: Please tell us a bit about yourself.

Michelle: I received my degree in College Student Development over 17 years ago and have been employed at SCSU since. My husband and I have two teenage daughters who keep us on the move with their many extra-curricular activities. I am a board member for a number of different organizations in the area which allows me to give back to my community by serving those who are in need.

CCSD: Please tell us about your career path in student affairs and your current position.

Michelle: I began my journey in student affairs after working as a Business Analyst, Software Tester, Human Resources Recruiter, and Marketing Consultant. The bulk of my higher education career has been in a career center where I have worked as a Graduate Assistant, Interim Associate Director, Associate Director, Interim Director, and now Executive Director at SCSU. My work has allowed me to strategize and build strong partnerships with staff, faculty, administration, employer partners, and other community members, but most of all, thousands of students. I have taught undergraduate and graduate level courses and am a Gallup Strengths Certified Coach, Prosci Certified Change Practitioner, and certified in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. I enjoy being closely involved with others in contributing to common goals and visions in my work on many internal and external committees and boards.



Michelle Schmitz
CCSD Class of 2005

CCSD: What do you love about your work in student affairs?

Michelle: You can't work in student affairs without students. To work in an environment of learning helps me to stay grounded and real. The various backgrounds, life experiences and perspectives of those around me have shaped me to be more open-minded and thoughtful in how I approach situations every day.

CCSD: What is challenging about your work in student affairs?

Michelle: The external pressures facing our students are what I found most challenging. Our role is to help students engage and reflect upon their experiences, yet often we find students too overwhelmed with trying to keep up with the demands of life. Couple that with societal distractions and the rising costs around them and it makes it hard to build meaningful relationships as they often are limited on time.

Alum Spotlight continued...

Michelle: In order to serve all students equitably, we need to weave our work into the academic curriculum which is also difficult as fulfilling course requirements is equally challenging for our colleagues in Academic Affairs.

CCSD: How has your CCSD education contributed to your present job as a student affair professional?

Michelle: Looking back on my coursework and time in the program, I feel it has helped me integrate theory and practice fairly seamlessly. I was fortunate to be able to take a variety of counseling courses that prepared me to attend to the needs of others by showing support and encouragement. I feel I am able to contribute to my current job by providing thoughts and ideas because I understand systems and relationships as well as insights about people.

CCSD: As a student affair professional, what are your core values in life, and how do you apply them to your profession?

Michelle: I value change, vision, harmony, creativity, cooperation, personal growth, possibilities, and variety. It may seem like a long laundry list, but my time in student affairs has given me the opportunity to continually evaluate and reflect upon the things that guide and motivate my attitude and actions.

CCSD: What tips or advice do you have for current and prospective CCSD students who are not sure about the functional area or specific career path they want to pursue in student affairs?

Michelle: Be flexible, open, and adaptable as much as possible. I have always been fond of John Krumboltz's planned happenstance theory because you never know when chance events can turn into actual opportunities. Another piece of advice I would give is "show up." Most, if not all, of the experiences I can look back on fondly simply happened because I was willing to push myself out of my comfort zone and do it. It is easy to believe that you need to be smart and have relevant experience in order to make an impact on something, but diversification of thought and being present can be more valuable than you think.

CCSD: Is there anything else you would like to share?

Michelle: There was a student affairs promotional poster that I saw a few years ago that said "Get a Job... Get a Life" because often those who end up in student affairs roles often never leave because you make such an impact in students' lives and you can use so many of your talents in a variety of ways. There are so many areas you can work in this field and even though my time has been spent primarily in the career center, I feel well equipped to take on whatever comes my way next.

CCSD at NASPA Regional Conference

From November 6-8, 2022, several CCSD students, faculty, and alumni made their way to the "Windy City" for "WEnvision Our Future" the NASPA IV-West/East Joint Regional Conference in Chicago, IL. Here are some highlights from our time together at the conference.



Conferencing is a great way for CCSD alumni, students, and faculty to connect. Go Huskies!



Mariia Tikhonova, CCSD Class of 2022, presented on interconnectivity. We love when CCSDers connect theory to practice!



Saloni Saraf, CCSD 2nd year student, presented not once, but twice, on supporting minoritized students in STEM.



As recipients of a 2021 NASPA IV-E Research & Practice Grant, **Dr. Aerial A. Ashlee, CCSD Graduate Director,** and **Samantha Yang, CCSD Class of 2022,** were invited to present preliminary findings from their Hmong American Student Affairs Educators (HASAE) study. **Sabrina N. Yang, 3rd year CCSD student,** is also a HASAE research assistant.

NASPA Regional Conference continued...

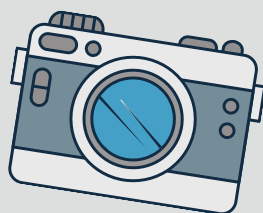
Silena Xiong, 2nd year CCSD student, was honored at the conference luncheon as the recipient of the 2022 Minnesota Graduate Student Rising Star Award for NASPA Region IV-E.



Silena on stage with several family members after the NASPA IV-W/E awards luncheon.

The Graduate Student Rising Star Award recognizes master's and/or doctoral students who have demonstrated excellence in the classroom, who intend to pursue a career in student affairs, who have displayed leadership and innovation in their assistantship and/or internship, or who has shown the potential to make significant contributions to the student affairs profession. In addition to this regional recognition, Silena will also be considered for the NASPA NASPA Graduate Student Rising Star award. Read more about Silena's nomination and award on [St. Cloud State TODAY](#).

Please email us your conference photos to include in future issues of The CCSD Dispatch. We love seeing CCSDers out and about in the profession. Go Huskies!



Silena back on campus with one of her co-nominators (and her GA supervisor) Jen Sell Matzke, SCSU Dean of Students.

Afolarera Onitiju: 1st Year CCSD Student



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My first semester as a CCSD student made me realize that I am indeed happy to be studying the field of student affairs for my graduate program. Every class I have attended since I started this program has increased my curiosity about gaining new knowledge about factors that may influence my decisions as an individual. My graduate assistantship with Dr. Aerial A. Ashlee has increased my cognition of the entire profession. The student affairs field has a strong respect for diversity, supports students in their development, and promotes positive interactions among student affairs professionals. Prior to my CCSD studies, I practiced law for five years in my home country of Nigeria. I was primarily familiar with corporate and commercial legal issues and the laws that were relevant to the briefs I worked on. Most of the student affairs terms I have been introduced to this semester were taught as electives in my undergraduate study and I had no reason to read or study them further until now that I have the opportunity to be in the field. My self-confidence and leadership skills have also increased greatly since my time in the program. CCSD has given me insights into the values and personal goals I curated this year, including acts of service, giving back to the community, and also finding a career that I am interested in and becoming an expert in that field.

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CCSD Alumni Updates

Nathan Bambenek, CCSD Class of 2012, was promoted earlier this month to Senior Academic Advisor in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Great work, Nathan!

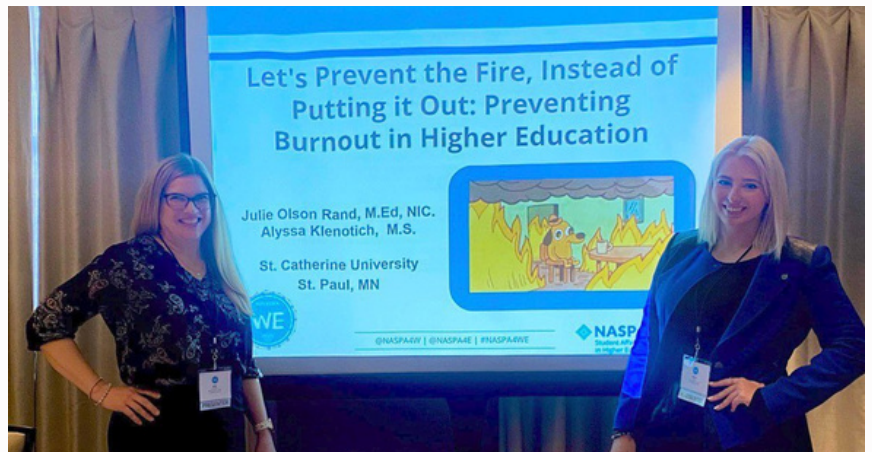
Carly McNiece, CCSD Class of 2020, started a new position in May 2022 as an Academic Advisor in the Leeds School of Business at the University of Colorado-Boulder. In addition to supporting Finance, Accounting, and Real Estate students, Carly oversees the exchange and international student program in her department. Carly is also serving on the planning committee for a campus-wide Advising Conference happening in spring 2023. Last, but certainly not least, Carly has been accepted into the Master's of Outdoor Recreation Economy program at CU-Boulder. She started classes this fall 2022 semester. Way to go, Carly! We are so proud of you.

Congratulations to **Nathan Brown, CCSD Class of 2020**, who accepted a new position as a Career Coach at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. Go Blue!

Dylan Koenig, CCSD Class of 2021, received the Outstanding New Advisor Award at Idaho State University, where he helps advise first and second-year students majoring in computer science or engineering. Well done, Dylan!

Congratulations to **Scott Vosen, CCSD Class of 2020**, who will be celebrating his second year work-aversary as an Academic Advisor at the University of Wisconsin, Superior on December 7, 2022!

From Feb-April 2023, **David Christof, CCSD Class of 2005**, will thru-hike the 675km Jordan Trail with his wife and their two sons to fundraise for Reclaim Childhood, a Czech Republic charity that creates safe and inclusive spaces for girls in Jordan.



Congratulations to **Alyssa Klenotich, CCSD Class of 2022**, on a timely and impactful presentation at the NASPA IV-WE Joint Regional Conference in Chicago, IL. Alyssa and her co-presenter have since been invited to be guests on *The Uplift* podcast hosted by Carole Chabries, a podcast about uplifting women leaders in higher education. Way to go Alyssa! We can't wait to listen to the episode.

Congratulations to **Bruce Thompson, CCSD Class of 2015**, who started in July 2022 as the Activities Director at Sartell High School!

Richard Smith, CCSD Class of 2011, was recently promoted to the SEL Coordinator for Dickinson Public Schools in Dickinson, ND. Congratulations!

Shane Rubel, CCSD Class of 2012, has been working with the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans since 2017, using transferable CCSD skills to assist at-risk Veterans facing homelessness.

PUBLICATION & PRESENTATIONS

We love celebrating the contributions our CCSD alumni, students, and faculty are making to the field of student affairs and higher education. If you have recently published or presented your work, please let us know by emailing ccsd@stcloudstate.edu and we'll include your work in the next CCSD Dispatch!

Ashlee, A. A. (2022, November). *Developing a professional and scholarly identity: Identifying your theoretical lens*. Invited presenter for inaugural ACPA Doctoral Institute virtual event.

Ashlee, A. A., Blair-Medeiros, S., Hing, P., & Pheneger, C. (2022, June). *Connecting, organizing, and visioning community for transracial adoptees of color in higher education*. Invited session at the annual meeting of the National Conference for Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education, Portland, OR.

Ashlee, A. A., & Combs, L. D. (2022). *Dreaming for our daughters: Un/learning monoracialism on our journey of multiracial motherhood*. *Genealogy*, 6(2), <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy6020045>

Ashlee, A. A., & Combs, L. D. (2022). *Identity interconnections: Pursuing poststructural possibilities in student affairs praxis*. Stylus.

Ashlee, A. A., & Combs, L. D. (Guests). (2022, October 5). *Identity interconnections: Pursuing poststructural possibility in student affairs praxis (No. 119)[Audio podcast]*. In *Student Affairs NOW*. <https://studentaffairsnow.com/identity-interconnections/>

Ashlee, A. A., & Mohajeri, O. (2022, May). *Connecting across contested racial identities to imagine radical, healing, and liberatory racial futures*. Invited pre-conference institute at the annual meeting of the National Conference for Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education, Portland, OR.

Ashlee, A. A., Samuels, G. M., & Baden, A. (2022, June). *Transracial adoptees in higher education: Engaging research to understand an often unseen and understudied college population*. Invited session at the annual meeting of the National Conference for Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education, Portland, OR.

Ashlee, A. A., & Yang, S. (2022, November). *Hmong American community cultural wealth: Implications for student development and professional pathways in student affairs*. Research session presented at the NASPA IV-W/E Joint Regional Conference, Chicago. IL.

Share your good news!

CCSD students and alumni, we would love to hear from you! **Have you recently presented at a conference or published something? Do you have a personal or professional life update that you would like to share with the CCSD community?**

Email us at:
ccsd@stcloudstate.edu



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Be sure to join our [CCSD Facebook Group](#) to stay up to date with all the latest happenings in the CCSD community!

[#SApro](#) [#SAgrad](#) [#SCSU](#)
[#studentaffairs](#)
[#highered](#) [#CCSDFam](#)

MORE PUBLICATION & PRESENTATIONS

Klenotich, A. & Olson Rand, J. (2022, November). *Let's prevent the fire, instead of putting it out: Preventing burnout in higher education.* Presentation at NASPA IV-W/E Joint Regional Conference in Chicago, IL.

Saraf, S. (2022, November). *Championing intrusive advising: How to effectively serve minoritized STEM student populations.* SA Talk presented at NASPA IV-W/E Joint Regional Conference in Chicago, IL.

Saraf, S. (2022, November). *How can I help?: Understanding minoritized STEM student populations' higher education journey.* Presentation at NASPA IV-W/E Joint Regional Conference in Chicago, IL.

Smith, R. (2022, June). *How to make adjustments to your school system on both sides of the triangle.* Presentation at the North Dakota Multi-Tiered System of Support Conference in Fargo, North Dakota.

Tikhonova, M. (2022, November). *Discovering identities of White international students and their perception of White privilege in the U.S.* Presentation at NASPA IV-W/E Joint Regional Conference in Chicago, IL.



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