INTERNATIONAL TEXTILE AND APPAREL ASSOCIATION
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Ahhh … summer: long days, hot and slow afternoons, crisp watermelon, refreshing dips in the water, hikes, gardening, farmers' markets, ice cream… I will keep this note brief so you have more time to enjoy it.

2026 RTC ABSTRACT ACCEPTANCE RATES

As reported in the June newsletter, this year we saw a 10% increase in research, teaching, and conceptual (RTC) abstract submissions. A total of 634 abstracts were submitted (up from 576 in 2025) and 625 were reviewed. The 2026 RTC acceptance rate is 65%, lower than the 2025 acceptance rate of 68.7%. For the Curatorial Exhibition Scholarship, four of the nine submissions reviewed were accepted, resulting in a 44% acceptance rate (40% in 2025).

In total, 406 RTC abstracts were accepted for presentation at the 2026 conference, up from 392 last year. The conference in Jacksonville will feature more research, teaching, and conceptual projects, including 140 oral presentations and 210 posters. The number of Pecha Kucha presentations will remain the same as last year (56).

A **BIG thank you** to all reviewers and track chairs who volunteered their time and expertise to review multiple abstracts and provide comments during the busiest time of the semester!

2026 DESIGN SUBMISSIONS

I am excited to share that we received a strong response to this year's call for design abstracts—248 submissions, compared with 241 submissions last year. Unfortunately, as was the case last year, 21 submissions were disqualified and not included in the review process because the authors did not follow the submission guidelines. All designers are encouraged to attend the annual webinar hosted by the Design Review Committee, during which the submission guidelines are reviewed and explained, and examples are discussed.

A summary of the 2026 design submissions by category follows:

- Total design submissions: 248 abstracts submitted, with 227 under review (241 and 221 in 2025, respectively),
- Design submissions by professional members: 89 abstracts submitted, with 82 under review (93 and 88 in 2025),
- Design submissions by graduate students: 47 abstracts submitted, with 41 under review (44 and 39 in 2025),
- Design submissions by undergraduate students: 112 abstracts submitted, with 104 under review (104 and 94 in 2025).

An Invitation to Reflect on ITAA

As we are in the second half of summer, I hope everyone can find some time to slow down, recharge, and reflect. In the remaining 2026 newsletters and at the Jacksonville conference, I'd like to **reflect on ITAA's culture.**

I invite you to email me (karpova@uncg.edu) with your honest thoughts. I truly want to hear every perspective—positive, critical, or somewhere in between. What do you value about ITAA, and what would you change? How has ITAA evolved over time? What would you like it to become in the next 5-10 years, and why?

You might reflect on what ITAA means to you, personally and professionally; its role in our discipline; how it compares with other professional organizations and conferences; or anything else important to you. Please share what feels most meaningful.

Your perspectives will help guide this conversation and shape how we think about ITAA's future. Any feedback shared in the newsletters or at the conference will be presented only in anonymously and in aggregate.

Thank you for supporting ITAA. I look forward to hearing from you!

Elena Karpova

Image Credit: Eric Dior on Unsplash

MORE REASONS TO JOIN US IN JACKSONVILLE

The 2026 ITAA Annual Conference continues to grow with exciting opportunities to connect, learn, and celebrate our profession.

Looking to maximize your conference experience? Arrive early and take advantage of the Wednesday pre-conference workshops. These interactive sessions provide participants with opportunities to dive deeper into timely topics, build new skills, and engage directly with colleagues and experts in focused learning environments. Workshops are an excellent way to kick off the conference and make the most of your time in Jacksonville.

Wednesday evening officially launches the conference with the New Attendee Welcome & Orientation, followed by the Opening Reception. The Opening Reception will have a 1940s theme with prizes for three exceptional style categories for dress. So, turn on your creativity whether you're attending for the first time or reconnecting with longtime colleagues. This is the perfect opportunity to build new relationships, reconnect with friends, and begin experiencing the collaborative spirit that makes the ITAA Annual Conference so special.

Start each day energized with the Wellness Exercise Sessions on Thursday and Friday mornings before the conference begins. Whether you're looking to stretch, move, or simply start the day refreshed, these sessions offer a great way to prepare for a full day of presentations and networking.

Throughout the conference, attendees can choose from an outstanding lineup of concurrent research presentations, special sessions, Pecha Kucha presentations, design exhibitions, and resource exhibits showcasing the latest scholarship and innovations in textiles, apparel, merchandising, design, consumer behavior, sustainability, and emerging technologies—including numerous sessions focused on artificial intelligence and digital transformation.

Thursday evening offers another opportunity to connect during the Student Fireside Chat, while Friday features both the Career Fair and the always-popular International Bazaar, providing valuable networking opportunities with colleagues, students, and industry partners.

Be sure to reserve Friday evening for one of the highlights of the conference. The evening begins with the Awards Dinner, followed by the Distinguished Lecturer, and concludes with the Awards Ceremony, where we will recognize the outstanding achievements and contributions of members across our community. It promises to be an inspiring celebration you won't want to miss.

And of course, Jacksonville's coastal setting, local attractions, and hospitality provide the perfect backdrop for reconnecting with colleagues from around the world. We look forward to welcoming you this November!

Amanda (Amy) Thompson and Meredith McQuerry, Co-Chairs

MESSAGE FROM VP OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT,

Kelly Cobb.

Happy Summer! As we look ahead to another exciting year with ITAA, our committees have been actively developing initiatives designed to strengthen our community, support professional growth, and enhance member engagement. **We invite you to learn more about these efforts and consider how you might get involved.**

Administrative Leadership Committee: The Administrative Leadership Committee continues to expand the **ITAA Leadership Development Series**, designed to support faculty and administrators at all stages of their careers. Upcoming programming will focus on navigating academic leadership pathways and sharing practical strategies for thriving in administrative roles. In addition, members are updating and maintaining the Academic Leadership contact list to strengthen communication across institutions. Leadership transition planning is also underway, with the election of a new committee chair scheduled during the Annual Conference.

Membership Committee: The Membership Committee remains focused on fostering a welcoming, connected, and engaged professional community. Current initiatives include expanding outreach to two-year and community college programs through updates to a historical contact database and exploring strategies to better engage undergraduate students, international institutions, industry partners, HBCUs, and community college faculty. Efforts are also underway to develop a post-conference membership campaign, create an exit survey for non-renewing members, and explore virtual coffee chats and networking opportunities that strengthen year-round engagement and member retention.

Professional Development Committee: The Professional Development Committee is developing programming that supports members throughout their academic and professional journeys. Planned webinars will focus on faculty success strategies, tenure and promotion preparation, dossier development, mentoring, and career advancement. The committee is also exploring initiatives to increase undergraduate awareness of ITAA opportunities and awards while identifying meaningful ways to engage students earlier in their professional development. Efforts to expand committee membership are ongoing, and colleagues interested in contributing to future programming are encouraged to participate. **We are seeking a colleague to Chair this committee.**

Culture Study Tour - Morocco 2027: Dr. Jana Hawley is well underway organizing the 2027 ITAA Culture Study Tour to Morocco. This immersive experience will offer members the opportunity to engage directly with Moroccan artisans and communities while exploring the country's rich textile traditions, including weaving, embroidery, natural dyeing, pottery, and other craft practices. If you are interested in planning or attending a **future** study tour, please reach out to **kcobb@udel.edu** for more information.

Get Involved: Opportunities for engagement are available through ITAA's webinars, seminars, and Annual Conference programming. **Webinars** are complimentary online presentations on topics of interest to the ITAA membership and may be proposed by individuals, committees, or external partners outside of the Annual Conference schedule. **Seminars** are fee-based professional development offerings organized by the Professional Development Seminars Committee and provide specialized training, skill development, or certification opportunities for members through virtual or in-person formats. In addition, **Special Topics and Salon Sessions** will continue to offer dynamic opportunities for learning, dialogue, and connection during the Annual Conference. Webinar guidelines and proposal forms can be found on the ITAA website under *Useful Resources* (https://www.itaaonline.org/useful-resources). We look forward to connecting with you at the Annual Conference and beyond.

News from the ITAA Counselor

Legacy Group Update

The ITAA Legacy Group, consisting of ITAA Fellows and Past Presidents, preserves the association's history, fosters mentorship, and recognizes the contributions of members who have advanced the textile and apparel discipline. The group is pleased to continue offering travel support for students and early-career professionals attending the annual conference and welcomes Melody LeHew (lehew@ksu.edu) as its new leader. Last year, the Group provided travel support to six conference attendees.

Applications for the conference travel support are due September 1, and the link to apply is below.

Legacy Support

Nominating Committee Update

The ITAA Nominating Committee consists of Melanie Carrico, Counselor and Chair; Elena Karpova, President; Charles Freeman, President-Elect; Andy Reilly, Past-President; Kerri McBee-Black, Member at Large; and Ruirui Zhang, Member at Large. The committee will soon begin reviewing potential candidates for the 2027 Council election.

As a reminder, ITAA members become eligible to serve on Council after chairing a committee. Serving on Council is a rewarding professional experience that provides opportunities to collaborate with dedicated colleagues, work closely with our outstanding Executive Director, and gain a deeper understanding of the many activities and functions that support ITAA.

The 2027 election will include positions for President-Elect, Vice President of Education, Vice President of Publications, and two Nominating Committee Members at Large. Members interested in serving on Council—either now or in the future—are encouraged to reach out to any member of the Nominating Committee to learn more about the nomination process and opportunities for service.

Message from the VP of Conferences

As we look ahead, I am excited to share that the International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) has an outstanding lineup of annual conferences planned over the next three years. We look forward to welcoming you to **Jacksonville, Florida in 2026; Punta Cana, Dominican Republic in 2027; and San Antonio, Texas in 2028.**

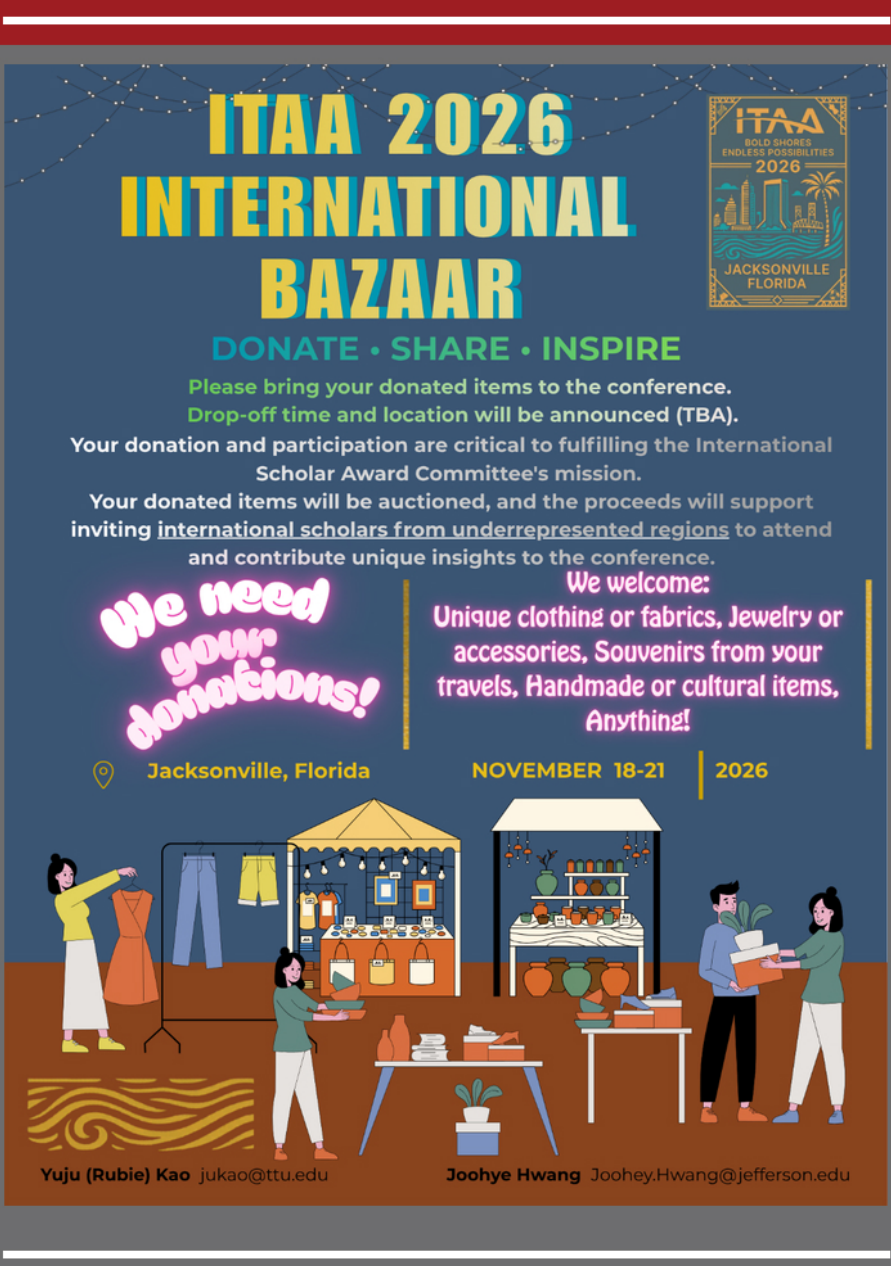
Behind each conference is a dedicated team of conference co-chairs and volunteers who are working tirelessly to create engaging programs, meaningful networking opportunities, and memorable experiences for our members. Their commitment and countless hours of planning ensure that each conference continues to support the scholarly, education, and professional development of our community. Many thanks to our conference co-chairs, **Amy Thompson and Meredith McQuerry** for 2026 Jacksonville, and **Amanda Muhammad and Caroline Kobia** for 2027 Punta Cana!

Based on the overwhelming positive feedback we received from attendees, we will continue using the conference mobile app to enhance your conference experience. The app provides convenient access to schedules, presentation information, and other important conference resources – all in one place.

If you have not yet registered for the 2026 ITAA Annual Conference in Jacksonville, I encourage you to do so soon to take advantage of the early-bird registration rate.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Jacksonville as we continue to build a vibrant and collaborative future for ITAA together.

Jennifer Yang, VP of Conference



ITAA 2026 INTERNATIONAL BAZAAR

DONATE • SHARE • INSPIRE

Please bring your donated items to the conference.
Drop-off time and location will be announced (TBA).
Your donation and participation are critical to fulfilling the International Scholar Award Committee's mission.
Your donated items will be auctioned, and the proceeds will support inviting international scholars from underrepresented regions to attend and contribute unique insights to the conference.

We need your donations!

We welcome:
Unique clothing or fabrics, Jewelry or accessories, Souvenirs from your travels, Handmade or cultural items, Anything!

Jacksonville, Florida | NOVEMBER 18-21 | 2026

Yuju (Rubie) Kao jukao@ttu.edu
Joohye Hwang Joohey.Hwang@jefferson.edu

Graduate Student Liaison Application

Dear ITAA Members,

We are pleased to announce that nominations are now open for the position of **Graduate Student Liaison** (GSL) to the ITAA Council for a one-year term beginning in January 2027. This important role offers graduate students the opportunity to represent their peers' interests and perspectives while actively contribution to the leadership of our association.

The Graduate Student Liaison is responsible for maintaining and monitoring graduate student communications, events, elections, and records. In addition, the liaison proposes special topic sessions, fireside chats, and newsletter articles to address emerging issues that are vital to graduate students. The liaison also attends Council meetings and prepares bi-annual reports for Council review. The liaison also serves on the Digital Marking and Communication Committee and is chair of the Graduate Student Digital Marketing and Communications Sub-Committee.

Eligibility: Candidates must be current ITAA members and enrolled as first- or second-year doctoral students by fall 2026.

We encourage you to nominate a graduate student colleague – or yourself – for this position. Serving as the Graduate Student Liaison is an excellent opportunity to gain leadership experience, build a professional network, and make a meaningful impact on the future of ITAA.

Nomination Materials: (Due September 1, 2026). Please send your materials to Hye-Shin Kim at hskim@udel.edu.

- Student Vita
- Brief vision statement outlining the candidate's goals as liaison
- Faculty endorsement (letter of recommendation)

Thank you for supporting the leadership development of our graduate student members. We look forward to receiving your nominations.

With best regards,

Hye-Shin Kim, Vic President of Education, ITAA

Ragul Senthil, Graduate Student Liaison, ITAA

Changes in CTRJ Leadership

Dear ITAA Members,

On behalf of the International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA), I am pleased to announce that **Dr. Young-A Lee**, Professor at Auburn University, has been appointed as the new Deputy Editor of the *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal (CTRJ)*, effective **July 1, 2026**.

Dr. Lee is an internationally recognized scholar whose research has advanced the fields of consumer behavior, technology innovation, and sustainability in textiles and apparel. She brings a wealth of editorial and leadership experience, along with a longstanding commitment to advancing high-quality scholarship within the ITAA community. Her expertise and vision will be invaluable as CTRJ continues to strengthen its impact and serve researchers around the world.

As Deputy Editor, Dr. Lee will work closely with Editor-in-Chief Dr. Lydia Kim to oversee the peer-review process, support the journal's strategic development, and uphold the rigorous scholarly standards that have established CTRJ as a major journal in the textiles and apparel discipline.

This appointment follows an open call for applications and a comprehensive review by the ITAA Publications Policies Committee (PPC). Based on the PPC's recommendation, Dr. Lee's appointment was approved by the ITAA Council.

As Deputy Editor, Dr. Lee will work closely with Editor-in-Chief Dr. Lydia Kim to oversee the peer-review process, support the journal's strategic development, and uphold the rigorous scholarly standards that have established CTRJ as a major journal in the textiles and apparel discipline.

We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to **Dr. Nancy Hodges** for her exceptional leadership and dedicated service as Deputy Editor. Throughout her tenure, Nancy played an instrumental role in maintaining the quality and integrity of CTRJ, mentoring associate editors and reviewers, and supporting authors through the peer-review process. Her contributions have had a lasting impact on the journal and the broader ITAA community. We sincerely thank Nancy for her many years of service and wish her every happiness in her retirement.

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Young-A Lee on her appointment and in thanking Dr. Nancy Hodges for her outstanding contributions to *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* and ITAA!

Sincerely,

Tunmin (Catherine) Jai, Ph.D., Texas Tech University
Vice President of Publications

A few words from the New Deputy Editor of CTRJ--I am thrilled and deeply honored to be appointed as Deputy Editor of *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* (CTRJ), ITAA's official scholarly journal, effective July 1, 2026. Having been part of the CTRJ community for more than 25 years as a reader, author, reviewer, Editorial Board member, Associate Editor, and Co-Guest Editor, I am truly grateful for the opportunity to give back to a journal that has played such an important role in my academic journey. I sincerely appreciate ITAA's confidence in me and look forward to working alongside our authors, reviewers, editorial team, and readers to support CTRJ's continued excellence and scholarly impact as ITAA's flagship journal. It is truly a privilege to serve our scholarly community in this role.

A few words from the outgoing and inaugural Deputy Editor of CTRJ--As I conclude my tenure as the inaugural Deputy Editor of *CTRJ* and prepare for my retirement from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to serve our discipline in this role over the past six years. It has been both an honor and a privilege, and I hope my contributions have made a positive impact on the journal and our scholarly community. I am deeply grateful to the entire editorial team, especially Dr. Lydia Kim, Editor-in-Chief, and all of the Associate Editors, whose professionalism, support, and collegiality have made this experience so rewarding. I would also like to thank Dr. Catherine Jai, Vice President of Publications, for her steadfast advocacy and support of the journal. As I step away from this role, I am especially pleased to welcome Dr. Young-A Lee as the next Deputy Editor. Dr. Lee is an outstanding scholar and leader whose dedication to excellence will serve the journal and our discipline well. Finally, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the authors and reviewers whose dedication and commitment to excellence continue to strengthen our discipline's flagship journal. *CTRJ* plays a vital role in shaping and advancing our field, and we should all take pride in the outstanding scholarship it publishes. I know I certainly do. Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving *CTRJ* and our discipline. It has been a truly meaningful and rewarding chapter in my academic career.

ITAA Early-Stage Support Initiative for Conference Attendance

The International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) is pleased to announce the launch of the **ITAA Early-Stage Support Initiative**, a new program designed to help members attend the ITAA Annual Conference when financial circumstances might otherwise prevent their participation.

ITAA recognizes that attending the annual conference is an important investment in professional growth, networking, collaboration, and career development. This is especially true for members who are early in their careers or who have limited institutional funding available. Through this initiative, ITAA reaffirms its commitment to making conference participation more accessible and ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent members from engaging with our vibrant professional community.

For the 2026 conference, financial assistance will be available to:

- **Up to 10 Professional Members**, each receiving **$375** (50% of the Early Bird conference registration fee).
- **Up to 10 Undergraduate or Graduate Student Members**, each receiving **$187.50** (50% of the Early Bird conference registration fee).

Applications will be reviewed by a committee consisting of the ITAA President, President-Elect, Counselor, and Treasurer. In evaluating applications, the committee will consider several factors, including:

- Demonstrated financial need.
- The level of conference funding available through the applicant's institution or employer.
- The professional and academic benefits the applicant is expected to gain from attending the conference.
- Preference for applicants who have not previously received funding through this initiative.

ITAA is proud to invest in the success of its members and hopes this new initiative will enable more individuals to participate in the exchange of ideas, scholarship, and professional connections that make the Annual Conference such a valuable experience.

We encourage eligible members to apply and take advantage of this exciting new opportunity. Additional information, including eligibility requirements, application instructions, and deadlines, is available on the ITAA website.

Apply Early-Stage

Dear Graduate Students,

To help students connect with potential roommates for the ITAA Annual Conference, we have created a roommate-matching form. If you are interested in finding a roommate, please complete the form using the link below:

Roommate Matching

Students who complete the form and consent to share their information will be able to connect with others seeking roommates. Participation is entirely voluntary.

Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you at the conference.

Ragul Senthil | rasenthi@ttu.edu
2026 Graduate Student Liaison

BECOME A CONFERENCE VOLUNTEER IN JAX!

Hello Fellow ITAA Members!

As we are preparing to embark upon Bold Shores and Endless Possibilities in Jacksonville this November, Amy and I are looking for volunteers to help make this the best ITAA conference yet! Whether it's assisting with tours, meal-ticket check-in, posters, or design awards, we need you! I remember volunteering as a tour leader at my very first ITAA conference in Charlotte, NC in 2014. Whether it's your first time attending ITAA or your 20th, we would love to serve alongside you! Volunteering is a great way to meet fellow members, both new and longstanding. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact me at mmcquerry@fsu.edu and indicate which area(s) you would like to serve.

Thanks in advance for your willingness to volunteer your time. We look forward to seeing everyone in Jacksonville soon!

Meredith and Amy

Call for Abstracts: 2027 Fashion and Functionality Symposium

Join us for the 2027 Fashion and Functionality Symposium, hosted by the Department of Apparel, Events, and Hospitality Management at Iowa State University, April 15–17, 2027.

We invite scholars, educators, designers, practitioners, and students to submit abstracts exploring the intersection of fashion, functionality, sustainability, technology, and innovation. Submissions are welcomed in the areas of Research, Teaching, Concept, and Juried Invited Design Exhibition.

For submission guidelines and additional information about the symposium and the *Fashion Practice* special issue, please visit the links below.

- 2027 Fashion and Functionality Symposium Call Link:

Symposium Link

- 2028 Fashion Practice Journal Link:

Journal Link

Any questions, please contact Symposium Co-Chairs:

- Creative Scholarship: Dr. Ling Zhang, Associate Professor, Iowa State University, lzhang1@iastate.edu
- Product Development: Dr. Sibei Xia, Associate Professor, Iowa State University, sibeixia@iastate.edu
- Pro. Oro Bruno, Assistant Professor, Iowa State University, brunooro@iastate.edu
- Textile Science: Dr. Chunhui Xiang, Associate Professor, Iowa State University, chxiang@iastate.edu
- Culture and Museum: Dr. Kate Greder, Assistant Professor, Iowa State University, kcgreder@iastate.edu
- Fashion Merchandising: Dr. Telin (Doreen) Chung, Professor, Iowa State University, tdchung@iastate.edu

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Help Showcase Your Program in the New ITAA Member Programs Directory

ITAA is pleased to introduce a new Member Programs Directory, designed to highlight the outstanding college and university programs represented by our membership.

This new resource will provide a centralized listing of member institutions ans the unique opportunities their programs offer, helping foster collaboration, increase visibility, and strengthen connections across the textile and apparel academic community.

To ensure the directory remains current and valuable, program information will be reviewed and updated annual during the summer months.

We Need Your Program's Information

To launch this initiative, we are asking each institution to submit its program information through a brief online form. This is a wonderful opportunity to showcase your program's strengths, distinctive offerings, and opportunities for students and faculty.

To avoid duplicate entries, please designate one representative from your institution to complete the form on behalf of your program. If you completed the form previously, please do not complete again; we are currently gathering information and have not started the website page yet.

Your participation is essential in helping us build a strong, accurate, and comprehensive directory that reflects the depth and diversity of ITAA member programs.

Submit Information

New Position Openings

- Assistant/Associate Professor, Texas Tech University
- Open Rank, Tenure-Track, Cornell University
- Clinical Assistant Professor, Costume Design, Arizona State University, Los Angeles
- Clinical Assistant Professor, Fashion Design, Arizona State University, Los Angeles
- Clinical Assistant Professor, Fashion Design, Arizona State University, Phoenix
- Assistant Professor, Fashion Merchandising, Arizona State University, Phoenix

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Sherry Schofield, Ph.D.
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