INTERNATIONAL TEXTILE AND APPAREL ASSOCIATION

2026 OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 49-5

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear ITAA Members,

As our Annual Conference in Jacksonville approaches, I find myself thinking not only about the exciting program ahead, but also about what makes our annual gathering so important to ITAA.

Our conference is one of the few times each year when so many members of our community come together in one place—faculty, students, researchers, designers, administrators, industry partners, longtime members, and those attending for the very first time. It gives us an opportunity to strengthen existing relationships, welcome new colleagues, exchange ideas, and consider how we can continue to advance our discipline and our organization.

An event of this size is also truly a collective effort. In addition to our conference co-chairs, Meredith McQuerry and Amanda Thompson, and our Executive Director, Sherry Schofield, many ITAA members and volunteers have contributed their time and expertise throughout the year. Reviewers evaluated hundreds of submissions, track chairs helped shape the scholarly program, committee members developed special sessions and activities, and many others have worked behind the scenes to create a meaningful experience for everyone attending.

There are still opportunities to become involved once we arrive in

Jacksonville. I encourage you to consider volunteering during the conference, whether at the registration desk or in another role that helps everything run smoothly. Please contact Sherry if you would like to help. Volunteering is also a wonderful way for students, newer members, and first-time attendees to meet people and become more connected to ITAA.

I especially encourage everyone to take advantage of the opportunities that happen beyond the formal presentations. Attend a committee meeting. Introduce yourself to someone whose work interests you. Visit with our Resource Exhibit partners. Talk with a student or first-time attendee. Reconnect with a colleague you have not seen since last year. Some of the most valuable professional relationships within ITAA begin with these informal conversations.

Our Friday committee meetings provide another opportunity to learn more about the work of ITAA and to become involved. ITAA depends upon members who are willing to share their ideas, expertise, and time, and the conference is an excellent place to discover where your interests might fit within the organization.

And, of course, I am looking forward to celebrating together. Our Wednesday evening "**Where It Began: A 1940s Opening Reception**" will give us a chance to recognize ITAA's history while enjoying one another's company. I am working on some 1940s-inspired accessories and hope to finish them in time!

As you make your plans for Jacksonville, I hope you will think of the conference as more than a schedule of sessions to attend. It is our opportunity to come together as a professional community—to learn from one another, support the next generation of scholars and professionals, celebrate accomplishments, and help shape the future of ITAA.

I look forward to seeing you in Jacksonville!

Warmly,

Elena Karpova, eekarpov@uncg.edu
President, International Textile and Apparel Association

Image Credit: Eric Dior on Unsplash

Jacksonville Is Almost Here!

After months of planning, the ITAA Annual Conference is almost here! As conference co-chairs, we are excited to welcome you to Jacksonville, November 18–21, for several days filled with research, teaching, design, professional development, and opportunities to connect.

This year's program reflects the breadth of scholarship and creative activity within ITAA. Across the conference, you will find oral research presentations, design scholarship, Pecha Kucha and poster sessions, special-topic sessions, workshops, committee activities, and opportunities to engage with colleagues from across the discipline.

There are also several featured events to look forward to. On Thursday, Emily McCarthy, co-founder and Chief Community

Officer of GORUCK, will join us for our Keynote Luncheon. Friday evening will feature our Distinguished Lecturer, Young-A, followed by our awards celebration recognizing the accomplishments and contributions of ITAA members.

Our Resource Exhibit will be open Thursday and Friday, and we encourage everyone to spend time visiting our participating organizations and industry partners. These exhibitors support ITAA and provide valuable resources, services, and connections for our members. Be sure to include time in your schedule to visit their tables and learn more about what they have to offer.

Plan Your Conference Before You Arrive

The detailed conference program is now available, and we strongly encourage you to review it before traveling. With concurrent sessions and activities taking place throughout the conference, a little advance planning will help you identify the presentations, special sessions, meetings, and events you most want to attend.

The program is color-coded by activity type and session focus to make navigating the schedule easier. Once you arrive, the conference app will be an especially important resource. Use it to check the most current schedule, locate meeting rooms, review exhibitor information, connect with other attendees, and receive conference announcements and last-minute updates.

A Reminder for Presenters

If you are presenting in Jacksonville, please carefully review the requirements for your presentation format before leaving home.

Oral presenters should have their presentations completed in advance and respond promptly to communications from their session presider. Poster and Pecha Kucha presenters should confirm the specific format requirements for their sessions. Taking care of these details before arriving will make the experience easier for both you and your fellow presenters.

We also ask everyone to arrive at sessions on time and remain for the entire session whenever possible. Supporting your fellow presenters is an important part of the collegial conference experience.

Make Time for More Than Sessions

With such a full program, it can be tempting to move directly from one presentation to another. We hope you will also leave room for conversation and connection.

Friday’s box lunch and committee meetings provide a convenient opportunity to learn more about ITAA activities while remaining on site. Our Resource Exhibit provides another place to connect with colleagues and industry partners. Students and first-time attendees, in particular, should not hesitate to introduce themselves, ask questions, and become part of the conversations taking place throughout the conference.

And don't forget comfortable shoes! Our riverfront location provides a wonderful setting for the conference, and we hope you will have an opportunity to enjoy Jacksonville and the riverfront during your stay.

Most importantly, come ready to learn, share your work, meet new people, reconnect with longtime colleagues, and enjoy being together again as an ITAA community.

We have been planning for Jacksonville for many months, and we are excited that it is finally almost time to welcome you!

Amanda J. Thompson and Meredith McQuerry
2026 ITAA Conference Co-Chairs

Join the Conversation at the 2026 ITAA Conference!

Reframing Learning Competencies for the Future: Aligning the ITAA Meta-Goals Across Institutional and Accreditation Contexts

November 19 (Thursday), 3:15 pm – 4:30 pm

For the past 30 years, the ITAA Meta Goals have provided a foundation for curriculum planning, assessment, and educational program development across textile and apparel-related disciplines. As our field continues to evolve, however, new questions are emerging about how educational frameworks can best support students, faculty, institutions, and the broader discipline in an increasingly interconnected world.

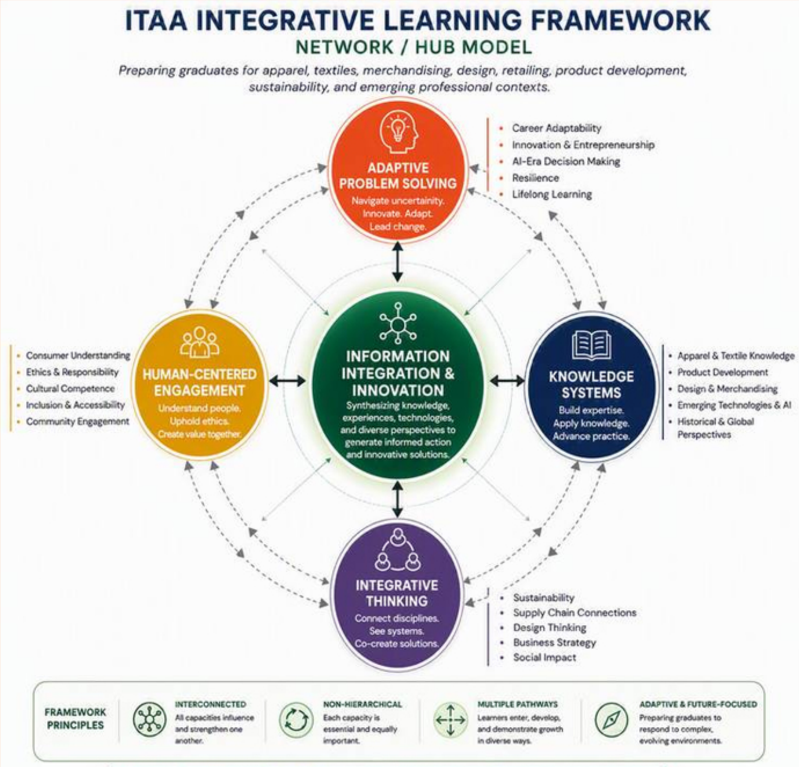
Currently, the ITAA Undergraduate Education and Standards Committee is exploring the future of the Meta Goals and the possibility of developing a broader framework that can serve the diverse needs of ITAA member institutions. Committee discussions have been informed by member feedback, Council input, and conversations with ITAA leadership regarding the future direction of educational standards within our organization.

Rather than focusing exclusively on specific disciplinary content, we propose a framework that explores broader capacities that may remain relevant across institutional missions, program structures, and professional pathways. **The proposed framework includes five themes:** (1) knowledge systems, (2) integrative thinking, (3) human-centered engagement, (4) adaptive problem solving, and (5) information integration and innovation (see figure below). These concepts reflect the growing interconnectedness of many textiles and apparel related areas that make our discipline.

During our special topic session in November, the Committee will share our vision and ideas behind this framework and continue our conversation about how ITAA might articulate shared competencies while supporting the diversity of programs represented across our membership. Designed as a collaborative working forum, members will have opportunities to discuss emerging educational challenges, share perspectives from their institutions and professional contexts, and contribute ideas that may help shape the next generation of ITAA educational competencies. **We hope you will join the Committee in Jacksonville and contribute your voice to this important discussion!**

Barbara Trippeer Chair, ITAA Undergraduate Education Standards Committee

Hye-Shin Kim Vice President of Education, ITAA



ITAA INTEGRATIVE LEARNING FRAMEWORK

NETWORK / HUB MODEL

Preparing graduates for apparel, textiles, merchandising, design, retailing, product development, sustainability, and emerging professional contexts.

ADAPTIVE PROBLEM SOLVING
Navigate uncertainity.
Innovate. Adapt.
Lead change.

- Career Adaptability
- Innovation & Entrepreneurship
- AI-Era Decision Making
- Resilience
- Lifelong Learning

HUMAN-CENTERED ENGAGEMENT
Understand people.
Uphold ethics.
Create value together.

- Consumer Understanding
- Ethics & Responsibility
- Cultural Competence
- Inclusion & Accessibility
- Community Engagement

INFORMATION INTEGRATION & INNOVATION
Synthesizing knowledge, experiences, technologies, and diverse perspectives to generate informed action and innovative solutions.

KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS
Build expertise.
Apply knowledge.
Advance practice.

- Apparel & Textile Knowledge
- Product Development
- Design & Merchandising
- Emerging Technologies & AI
- Historical & Global Perspectives

INTEGRATIVE THINKING
Connect disciplines.
See systems.
Co-create solutions.

- Sustainability
- Supply Chain Connections
- Design Thinking
- Business Strategy
- Social Impact

FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES

INTERCONNECTED All capacities influence and strengthen one another.

NON-HIERARCHICAL Each capacity is essential and equally important.

MULTIPLE PATHWAYS Learners enter, develop, and demonstrate growth in diverse ways.

ADAPTIVE & FUTURE-FOCUSED Preparing graduates to respond to complex, evolving environments.

A dynamic, integrated approach to learning that prepares graduates for meaningful impact in a complex world.

TAPAC
Textile and Apparel Programs Accreditation Commission

Beyond Accreditation: A Challenging and Transformative Journey with TAPAC

Going through the TAPAC accreditation process was challenging in the best possible way. It required us to look closely at our program and ask ourselves what we were doing well, but also reflect on how we could demonstrate it through meaningful evidence.

One of the most valuable moments of this journey was the three-day site visit. During their time at the Universidad de Monterrey (UDEM) and the Centro Roberto Garza Sada (CRGS), TAPAC Site Visitors and Board of Commissioners members Elizabeth Bye, Young A Lee, and Tammy Kinley had the opportunity to experience our program beyond documents and reports. They toured our campus and facilities, met with faculty members, observed classes related to fashion, design, and technology, and, most importantly, engaged directly with our students.

Their conversations with students allowed them to better understand their experiences, and learning processes. For us, it was particularly meaningful to see our academic community interact so openly with the visiting team and to have the opportunity to share what makes our program unique.

One of the classes that particularly captured their attention was our Experimental Fashion Design and Conceptual Design studio. The course combines conceptual exploration with hands-on experimentation. While students develop and articulate their design concepts, they also explore innovative and sustainable materials and their processes, including the creation of biomaterials using organic waste such as fruit peels and coffee grounds. Seeing these experiments evolve into successful material outcomes provided a tangible example of how creativity, sustainability, research, and experimentation can coexist within the fashion classroom.

At the conclusion of the site visit, the visiting team shared their observations and recommendations with us. Their feedback was insightful, quite thoughtful, and remarkably valuable for us. Overall, we had many strong practices already taking place within the Fashion design program, but one of our greatest opportunities was learning how to systematically collect, organize, and use evidence to demonstrate academic quality and student learning outcomes.

In only three days, TAPAC helped us see our own program from a different perspective. Their recommendations provided a clearer path for aligning our existing practices with TAPAC standards and identifying areas that required additional follow-up.

What followed was a significant amount of work. We strengthened our assessment processes, became more intentional about measuring academic outcomes, developed better ways to collect evidence of student learning and program effectiveness, but most importantly, we learned that assessment is not simply about documenting what has already happened, it can become a powerful tool for making informed decisions and supporting continuous improvement.

The changes that emerged from the TAPAC process have had a positive impact on our program. Today, we have a much clearer understanding of how to evaluate academic quality and have the certainty that the program is working correctly, following document results, and using evidence to guide conversations about curriculum, teaching, and student learning outcomes.

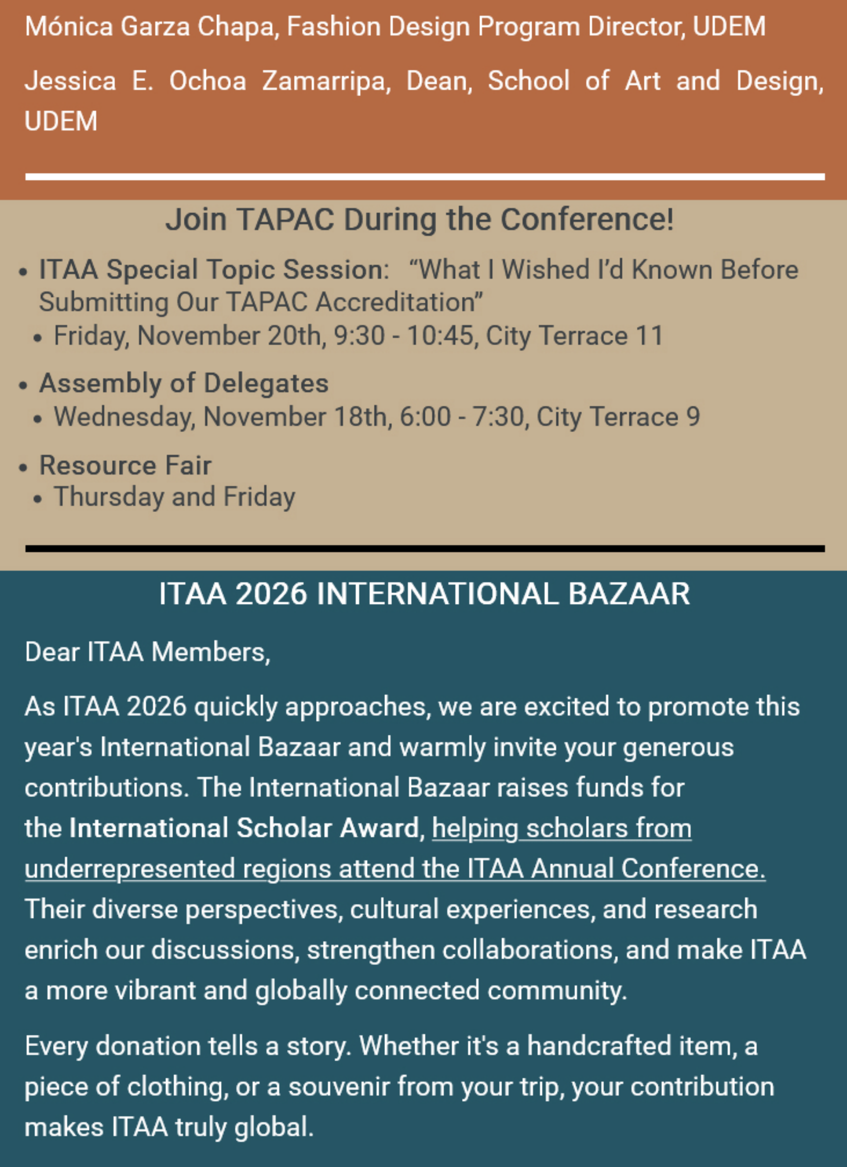
The process has required time, collaboration, reflection, and commitment from our entire academic community. It has been demanding, but absolutely worth it.

For us, becoming part of TAPAC represents much more than achieving accreditation. It means joining an international community committed to strengthening textile and apparel education through reflection, evidence, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

We are especially proud to represent Universidad de Monterrey (UDEM) and to become the first program in Latin America to be part of TAPAC. At the same time, we recognize that accreditation is not the end of the journey. If anything, it has given us a stronger foundation and a clearer path for what comes next.

Looking back, the experience can still be described in the same way: challenging in the best possible way, and completely worth it!

By:



Mónica Garza Chapa, Fashion Design Program Director, UDEM

Jessica E. Ochoa Zamarripa, Dean, School of Art and Design, UDEM

Join TAPAC During the Conference!

- **ITAA Special Topic Session:** "What I Wished I'd Known Before Submitting Our TAPAC Accreditation"
  - Friday, November 20th, 9:30 - 10:45, City Terrace 11
- **Assembly of Delegates**
  - Wednesday, November 18th, 6:00 - 7:30, City Terrace 9
- **Resource Fair**
  - Thursday and Friday

ITAA 2026 INTERNATIONAL BAZAAR

Dear ITAA Members,

As ITAA 2026 quickly approaches, we are excited to promote this year's International Bazaar and warmly invite your generous contributions. The International Bazaar raises funds for the **International Scholar Award**, helping scholars from underrepresented regions attend the ITAA Annual Conference. Their diverse perspectives, cultural experiences, and research enrich our discussions, strengthen collaborations, and make ITAA a more vibrant and globally connected community.

Every donation tells a story. Whether it's a handcrafted item, a piece of clothing, or a souvenir from your trip, your contribution makes ITAA truly global.

How You Can Help

- Bring your donated item(s) to the conference.
- International Bazaar 2026: Nov 20, Fri, 5:15 – 6:15 pm, Lobby outside the Grand Ballroom
- Donation Drop-off: Nov 18th , Wed, 7:30 am – Nov 20th , Fri, 12:00 pm, Registration Desk
- No donation is too small—every item makes a difference.

Thank you for helping create opportunities for international scholars and for supporting a more diverse and inclusive ITAA community.

International Bazaar Subcommittee Chair: Yuju (Rubie) Kao (jukao@ttu.edu).

International Scholar Award Committee Chair: Joohye Hwang (Joohye.Hwang@jefferson.edu)

Celebrating Scholarship at ITAA 2026

As we look ahead to the 2026 ITAA Annual Conference in Jacksonville, Florida, I am excited to share a brief look at this year's scholarship review process and the many contributions that have helped shape our conference program.

2026 Scholarship at a Glance

This year's ITAA scholarship review brought together a wide range of research, teaching, creative, and design scholarship. For Research, Teaching, and Concept (RTC) submissions, 634 abstracts were submitted, 625 finalized, and 406 accepted, including 140 oral, 210 poster, and 56 Pecha Kucha presentations.

The Curatorial Exhibition Scholarship (CES) received 9 submissions, with 4 accepted. For Design submissions, 247 entries were submitted, and 226 were reviewed, including 81 professional, 41 graduate, and 104 undergraduate submissions, with 97 accepted, including 36 professional, 18 graduate, and 43 undergraduate designs. Together, these contributions reflect the breadth and diversity of ITAA scholarship and will help create a rich intellectual program for our Jacksonville conference.

Recognizing Our Scholarship Committees

This extensive review process was made possible by the dedicated work of our committee chairs, co-chairs, and reviewers. I would like to especially recognize Claire Cho and Laura McAndrews, Conference Abstract and Paper Review Committee; Dina Smith-Glaviana, Curatorial Exhibition Scholarship Review Committee; Chanjuan Chen and Laura Kane, Design Education and Scholarship Committee; Kendra Lapolla, Design Review Committee; and Jin Su, Student Best Paper Review Committee. I would also like to extend a special thank-you to our Executive Director, Sherry Schofield, for coordinating the many details and providing invaluable support to all of our committees throughout the process.

I am grateful to all committee members for their time, expertise, and thoughtful reviews. Your collective efforts have been essential in shaping a strong and engaging scholarship program for our Jacksonville conference.

Looking Ahead to Jacksonville

I look forward to seeing everyone in Jacksonville and learning from one another through the excellent research, teaching, design, and creative scholarship being shared at the conference. Thank you to all ITAA members for your continued contributions, creativity, and commitment to advancing our field. I look forward to seeing you in Jacksonville!

All the best,
Julie Chang, VP of Scholarship, ITAA

Position Openings Since Last Newsletter

- Assistant / Associate Professor, Merchandising, Louisiana State University
- Assistant / Associate Professor, Design, Louisiana State University

Sherry Schofield, Ph.D.

Executive Director, ITAA

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