

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
May 3, 2024

DEAC Board of Directors Election Results and Public Member Appointments

The Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) is pleased to announce the election of Ms. Jessica Park, Vice President and Dean of Abraham Lincoln University, and re-election of Ms. Tracey Abell, President of American College of Healthcare Sciences, and Mr. Stephen Haas, Director of Education at National Paralegal College, to the DEAC Board of Directors.

During the election, held in conjunction with DEAC's 98th Annual Business Meeting, DEAC member institutions elected Ms. Park and re-elected Mr. Haas and Ms. Abell to serve a three-year term, through March 31, 2027.



Ms. Jessica Park is the Vice President, the Dean of the School of Law, and a professor of law at Abraham Lincoln University. She manages the School of Law department, advises managers on higher education compliance, institutional research, and program-related outcomes, and teaches Future Interests and Mortgages. Ms. Park earned a B.A. with honors in English Literature from Stanford University and a Juris Doctor degree from Stanford Law School. She is a licensed attorney in the state of California. After volunteering as an Educational Standards Evaluator, Ms. Park served in the DEAC Standards Committee from 2015 to 2022, chairing during her second term. Since 2020, she has also volunteered as a registered law school dean in the Committee of State Bar Accredited and Registered Law Schools, an advisory committee to the State Bar of California's Committee of Bar Examiners.

DEAC is also excited to announce the appointment of Dr. Michael Garn, Interim Director for Learning Design and Analytics at Georgia Tech Professional Education, Dr. Kevin Ruth, Managing Director of Westlake Global, and Ms. Ebony Lawrence, Instructional Designer at Amazon Web Services to the DEAC Board of Directors. Dr. Garn, Dr. Ruth, and Ms. Lawrence appointments as public members are for a three-year term, through March 2027.



Ms. Ebony Lawrence, CPTD has served in various roles in higher education for over 15 years. Ebony served as the Associate Dean of Curriculum Instructional Design and Technology for Ultimate Medical Academy, an online allied health institution, where she led a team responsible for the creation and maintenance of programmatic curriculum for over 80 courses across 9 programs of study. Ebony's tenure as a Subject Specialist for Allied Health programs and Education Standards Evaluator for DEAC started back 2015. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Community Health Education from Virginia Commonwealth University, a Master of Science in Health Administration from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and has completed doctoral studies (ABD) at Capella University in the area of Public Health-Epidemiology.



Dr. Kevin J. Ruth is Managing Director of Westlake Global, a K-20 educational consulting firm, working closely with boards and leaders on strategy, growth, and innovation, as well as accreditation and regulation. Prior to founding Westlake, he served as President of Moreland University (Washington, DC), and Chief Executive Officer of ECIS, the Educational Collaborative for International Schools (London), a global membership organization for K-12 independent and international schools in 90 countries. He holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Rutgers University, as well as executive education credentials from Stanford University and the Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford. In addition, he is a Stanford Certified Project Manager (SCPM®) and a Certified Merger and Acquisition Advisor (CM&AA®).



Dr. Michael "Myk" Garn is an academic innovator and strategist. In his career, Dr. Garn has worked at colleges, state systems, regional collaboratives, and an Internet start-up. He was the founding Principal Investigator of the NSF AI Institute for Adult Learning and Online Education at Georgia Tech; an Assistant Vice Chancellor for New Learning Models for the University System of Georgia; Vice President for Academic Strategies for StraighterLine; Director of the Educational Technology Cooperative at the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB); Associate Vice President for eLearning at the Kentucky Council for Postsecondary Education; and the founding Chief Academic Officer and then Executive Director of the Kentucky Virtual University. He holds a bachelor's degree from Brooks Institute, a master's degree in Instructional Design from Michigan State, and a PhD in Educational Systems Evaluation from the University of Kentucky.

ABOUT DEAC

The Distance Education Accrediting Commission is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1926 that operates as a national accreditor of distance education institutions. DEAC's goal is to ensure a high standard of educational quality in the distance education institutions it accredits and a quality education for the students who study at its accredited institutions.

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