

Note of Appreciation for the 2016 ITAA Fellow Award

Marsha A. Dickson, University of Delaware

What an honor it is to have been awarded the International Textile and Apparel Association's Fellow Award. It is both a humbling and exhilarating time for me as I reflect on the many esteemed colleagues who have received the award and continue to make notable contributions to our field. I have been so fortunate in my career to have been mentored by accomplished scholars and found productive and enjoyable collaborations that fueled my output and my spirit. One thing my mentors pointed out to me decades ago was that ITAA is comprised of all types of individuals who are making an impact on students and the industry, and while some believe that it is important to teach and conduct research that supports current practices in industry, others believe that it is important to teach and conduct research that supports the industry they want to see in the future. Clearly these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but I fall into the latter category and have been fortunate to find like-minded colleagues—activists and change-makers—who follow an agenda of changing the industry “from the inside out.” These innovative change-makers contributed to the founding of Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Business (now, Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Practice-ESRAP) and its years of programming. Like me, they have found meaningful collaborations for teaching adventures, carrying out impactful research, and organizing special sessions and workshops that broaden understanding in our field about the social responsibility and sustainability challenges faced in the apparel industry. Considering the large number of scholarly presentations on topics of social responsibility and sustainability that were presented earlier this month in Vancouver, one could say our work has been influential. But there is still so much to do and on behalf of ESRAP, I urge current graduate students, junior faculty, mid-level faculty, and seasoned scholars to consider getting involved with ESRAP because you are likely to find someone there who would like to work with you in identifying and tackling an important problem in social responsibility and sustainability and ultimately making important contributions to our field.