

Walker, Jennifer

Page: Overview

While “career and technical education (CTE)” is new to many, those in the field have long understood the power and importance of education that provides students with high-tech, real-world learning infused with career exploration. Not only is CTE at the roots of today’s most relevant education trends such as ‘STEM’ and ‘Maker Spaces,’ it’s a vital component to ensuring America’s economic prosperity and status as a leader for innovation. It is part of ACTE’s mission to ensure the value of CTE continues to grow and gain the recognition it deserves.

ACTE’s Champion for CTE Awards were created to recognize education leaders, business and industry executives, celebrities and thought leaders who support and champion CTE programs as a vital part of developing a prepared, adaptable and competitive workforce. The words and actions of a few dedicated and influential individuals have the power to further best practices, foster supportive policies, and shape a more positive public opinion of CTE. These awards showcase outstanding champions—from local leaders to national figureheads—who have leveraged their influence to expand, improve, and promote CTE.

These examples of model leadership serve to inspire and inform other leaders on creative and meaningful ways to positively impact the field. Highlighting their stories aligns with ACTE’s goal of cultivating a positive image of CTE and recognizing a broad community of supporters, ultimately creating a stronger vision for the future of CTE and empowering its leaders to speak with a unified voice.

If you know of a deserving candidate for this recognition, we urge you to explore ACTE’s preeminent awards program.

These awards are open to education leaders, business and industry executives, celebrities, thought leaders and other individuals who have made a significant impact on the improvement and expansion of CTE programs and/or on positively influencing policymakers and public opinion regarding CTE. *Federal policymakers are not eligible for these awards and should instead be nominated for [ACTE’s Policymaker of the Year Award](#).* Greater consideration will be given to candidates who have repeatedly demonstrated their public support for CTE and who exhibit an understanding of the components of modern, high-quality CTE.

Nominations will be accepted online until May 1 and may be submitted by the candidate or by a third party nominator. All candidates who meet eligibility and criteria requirements will be highlighted on ACTE's website as a 'Champion for CTE Spotlight.' Top nominations may be featured as model leaders in a future issue of *Techniques*, and/or invited to present sessions at ACTE's CareerTech VISION.

An independent panel will review all submissions to select the national recipient(s) of the ACTE Champion for CTE Award, which will then be considered for approval by the ACTE Board of Directors. Winners will be notified in August and recognized at the ACTE Awards Banquet during CareerTech VISION.

All nominators permit ACTE to use and edit content of the application for promotional activities. ACTE reserves the right to maintain the anonymity of judges and confidentiality of their scores. Non-winning candidates may be re-nominated for the same or another Excellence Award the following year. Winning candidates at the national level may not be nominated for the same or another national ACTE Excellence Award within three years of their win.

Page: Basic Information

Nominator Information

Please provide your information as the nominator of this candidate.

Your Name

Walker, Jennifer

Email Address

jlwalker@chccs.k12.nc.us

Title

Cisco Academy Instructor

Employer

Chapel Hill High School

Phone Number

919-929-2106 ext. 41124

Relationship to the Candidate

Business partner

Candidate Information

Please provide information on the candidate being nominated.

Candidate's Name

Laura Laltrello

Title

VP & GM, Services, Data Center Group

Employer

Lenovo Corporation

Work Address

8001 Development Dr.
Morrisville North Carolina 27560 US

Email

lseay@lenovo.com

Phone Number

919-257-4875

Does the candidate have a background (diploma, certificate, degree) in a career and technical education field?

Not Sure

If yes, please provide more detail about their background in CTE.

Page: Description of Candidate

1. Please describe actions the candidate took to help expand, improve, and/or promote CTE.

Laura Laltrello first connected with Chapel Hill High School through the 2016 NAF Lenovo in the Classroom Program. She spent a day speaking with students in the Cisco Networking Academy program in April of that year. She saw promise in the students, and decided to find ways to provide opportunities and guidance for these talented students. She returned to Lenovo and worked to create a summer high school internship program. By June of 2016, Chapel Hill High students were interviewing for five high school summer internship positions. The following summer, she worked to find over 28 positions for local high school students, expanding the reach to other schools and CTE students. This summer Lenovo will host over 50 high school interns!

But she did not stop with the summer internship program. When offered a position on the CHHS Academy of Information Technology (AOIT) Advisory Board, she gladly accepted. She has returned as a classroom speaker every year in the Cisco classroom. She has helped with new equipment orders. She provided a team of engineers to help design the Cisco lab for our school renovation project. She gathered a team to host a tour of Lenovo for the Cisco Academy students, a field trip these students will never forget. When approached by a student about job shadowing, she gladly accepted and allowed the student to visit over the summer, showing the student around the Lenovo campus, introducing the student to other Lenovo leaders, and providing the student a peek into the day-to-day activities of her job.

Laura Laltrello sees promise in CTE and its students. She acts upon it. She has created so many opportunities for students at Chapel Hill High in the short time she has been connected with our school.

2. How did the candidate's actions shape the adoption/expansion of best practices in CTE?

Laura encourages students to build a skill set that is valued to businesses. She discusses the importance of certifications during class speaking engagements. She talks with the students about the value of soft skills in addition to technical skills. She has provided guidance with classroom design and equipment purchases. During AOIT Advisory Board meetings, she provides input to the board about current trends in the industry, and offers suggestions on course pathways, curriculum plans, and ways to connect the school with community. She has also recommended resources and contacts to assist with the recruitment of female students in our IT programs. She heads the summer high school internship program at Lenovo - she works with others to plan, implement, and evaluate the program, and it continues to grow.

3. How did the candidate's actions impact CTE policies or positively influence public opinion of CTE? How did these actions contribute to a broader understanding of modern CTE (not 'vocational education') that is robust, rigorous and relevant?

Through the implementation of the Lenovo high school internship program, Laura has shown others in the industry that high school CTE students are very talented and skilled. She promotes the value of these students, and continues to add more hiring managers and participants, which leads to more student positions and industry awareness. She speaks highly of the skill set the students earn through the high school CTE courses. She tells me that businesses are hesitant to hire high school students as they are not aware these students possess the skills needed to perform relevant work. She works to change this perception. She helps create job descriptions, matching industry needs to student skills. Business partners are often surprised to see high school students can meet the needs of these internship positions. Laura has no doubt, and continues to seek more positions for these highly skilled CTE students.

4. What is the scope of the candidate's impact on CTE?

Local

5. Would the candidate be willing to speak about their supportive efforts on behalf of CTE at an ACTE event?

Not Sure