



2022 Executive Board Election Candidate

Delegate to the NACAC Assembly: Middle East and Africa

Name: Christina McDade

Title: High School Counselor

Institution: American Community School of Abu Dhabi

Location/Region: United Arab Emirates/Middle East & North Africa

Member Group: Secondary (High School)

Background and Experience

Years of experience in post-secondary admissions counseling or related fields?

10+ years of experience

Please describe any professional or volunteer experience you feel would be relevant for serving on the International ACAC Executive Board.

I have served on the International ACAC Diversity Committee in its first four years. I currently serve as a membership task force member of the International School Counselors Association. I am an active member in the UAE counseling community, often presenting, sharing of information, and helping to coordinate visits to Abu Dhabi with other schools within the constraints of that area. I also served for two years as an Action for Happiness Facilitator, hosting monthly online gatherings focusing on the 10 keys of happiness, and a safe space for people to come together.

Please describe [how you have engaged in the international community](#), and the impact this has had on your professional life. Describe any [International ACAC Committee experience](#) you have.

I firmly believe in the power of community and collaboration, which has led to my involvement within International ACAC and in other areas. I started as a volunteer at conferences helping with the raffle and cheering counselors on during the 5K. This evolved into working with the pre-conference as an instructor and being flexible to present on both sides of the desk. I love that aspect because it gave an intimacy of getting to know new counselors, and those relationships have been such a blessing over the years. I have presented at every conference since 2017, and I took 2020-2021 to reevaluate my involvement with this organization.

Please describe [your affiliation with NACAC, if any](#). How long have you been a member of NACAC? Do you have any volunteer or committee work or experience with NACAC?

I am a member of NACAC through my current school and I plan to continue that relationship. I was able to attend my first NACAC conference in Louisville, where I also presented with the Netherlands and attended a wonderful preconference session.

Do you anticipate a change in your position or employer over the next year?

I am moving from 10 years in the Gulf to Lincoln Community School in Accra for Fall 2022.

[Delegate Specific Questions](#)

Please list any relevant experience you have working to bring about change in your community. Also, if you have any experience working with governance issues or with bylaws, be sure to mention this.

As an active member in both Kuwait and UAE with the counselor networks, I always advocate for the sharing of information instead of seeing things as a competition. It benefits no child if we don't learn best practices. Although the last time I worked on bylaws was in college, I am actively part of change within organizations, from being part of my schools committee for accreditation to finding a great way to collaborate with other K-12 counselors.

Name your three most impactful takeaways from the December 2020 DEI Organization Assessment Report. How would you advance the conversation around diversity and inclusion within International ACAC? How do you believe the Executive Board should function in this capacity?

1. The shared vision and mission- within any organization, change is hard to navigate if you were in on the ground level, and looking at the data of returning and new counselors, that seems to be the case. I appreciate the work that the committee is doing in revisiting who we are as an organization, but that leads to issue two-
2. Lack of responses to the survey- The data is a great place to start, but if only 17% of members completed a survey, and only 37% read, the question of who matters and how they matter is important. As a member who knows what it felt like to not be valued and then to be valued because of knowing the right people and being at the right kind of school, I can testify to how hard it is to figure out where I matter.
3. Member engagement- The first two issues leads to this one big one which is engagement. This is a key way the Executive Board can be a better assistance. Having an executive board who travel to or work in a variety of places gives a chance to make more intimate connections that can lead to more engagement and get the kind of voices that really need to be heard. Times are indeed changing, and hearing from an executive member in a more intimate way helps.

The International ACAC Executive Board has used Delegates to serve on committees as well as provide input into decision making. What "voice" do you feel you represent?

I represent the member who does not have the pedigree of the perfect school, perfect degree, perfect background. But I also represent the member who takes advantage of the opportunities that are not necessarily seen because that what we try to do with our students regardless.

All Applicant Questions

Please provide a maximum 250 word statement of why you are volunteering for the International ACAC Board, and other relevant information that you have not previously shared in this application. Your statement will be shared with the general membership if you are appointed to the Delegate position.

Taking two years off from my involvement with International ACAC provided time for clarity on what I want to be as a member of this organization and finding a way to make sure that leadership continues on this path of encouraging a community that values the diversity of all its members. As an organization, achievement and acceptance were centered on those close to the Executive Team, and most often they were White or White passing. However, from those of us who are Black to those of us who work in non-traditional school settings we have an insight that only we can bring that needs to be heard because our students make sure we do that every day. It's why we do what we do. I want to make sure that we continue on this journey, that it isn't lip service, but it is actionable, tangible, and continues to be relevant.

