



## Application for Region 2 Representative

**Name:** Ruru Huang

**Professional Title:** University and Career Counselor

**Institution/Organization:** Dulwich College Shanghai Pudong

**Institution/Organization Location:** China

[Candidate Video](#)

### **International ACAC Volunteer Experience:**

*Explain your motivation for pursuing a leadership role with International ACAC as well as why this position in particular. Highlight how your leadership experience and involvement with the organization make you a strong fit for the role.*

My volunteer experience began with making small changes within the counselors' community where I served. I started by organizing HK university virtual fairs consistently for four years and opening the events to the public after recognizing the rapidly increasing need to clarify myths in the admissions landscape as student interest from mainland China grew.

When working in Shenzhen, I reached out to two counselors to co-organize and ended up bringing more than 50 professionals in the Greater Bay area together to share practices, as I realized many counselors in the region were not in close conversation, and collaboration was limited. This effort marked the beginning of my commitment to community building.

I became increasingly active in submitting proposals to conferences, constantly inspired by peers. Building connections through co-presenting sessions has been deeply rewarding, even when the topics pushed me beyond areas where I initially felt like an expert.

Through 4 years of volunteering with ChinaCAC, the largest counseling and admissions organization in China, and serving as Chair of the Research, Scholarship, and Learning Committee, I have had the privilege of leading projects such as the Annual Report. Working with data collected from more than 200 school-based counselors across mainland China, we provided meaningful insights and references to support understanding of admissions trends.

Having worked in Beijing, Shenzhen, and now Shanghai, I have never stopped building connections and growing roots within the counseling community wherever I am. Beyond education, I have also volunteered with art centers, museums, and community festivals. These experiences recharge my energy, introduce me to remarkable people, and often grow into deeper professional collaborations grounded in mutual support.

I remain deeply grateful for opportunities to work alongside individuals I once looked up to, evolving from learning in the audience to sharing the spotlight with them in meaningful ways. It is difficult to capture this feeling in a single word, but it continues to energize me to pursue new collaborations and contribute wherever I can make a difference.

Collectively, these experiences have strengthened my commitment to collaboration, service, and connection. They have prepared me to contribute thoughtfully as a volunteer leader and to bring people together in ways that create lasting impact, even through small but meaningful change.

**Previous Experience in Leadership:**

*Please describe your leadership experience, including your leadership philosophy, strategies for managing and supporting a committee, and the approaches you use to foster communication, collaboration, accountability, and recognition. Highlight any accomplishments that demonstrate your leadership effectiveness.*

I will use the most recent event I initiated as an example. I collaborated with a counselor in Shanghai to launch a unique counselors' connect event, bringing together 40 counselors from Shanghai, Suzhou, and Nanjing.

In the early planning stage, I intentionally shaped the tone of the event: exposing fragility instead of positioning presenters as experts, and running a roundtable format to encourage engagement rather than a lecture format where fewer people speak and more listen. I reached out to several counselors to confirm school calendars, especially as the event approached Chinese New Year, and to gauge their willingness to join. While I conservatively predicted 20–30 participants, we ultimately received over 50 registrations. Due to venue capacity, participation was capped at 40.

From collecting discussion topics and using ChatGPT to help structure the agenda, to preparing materials and coordinating with sponsors for breakfast and lunch, the event became a surprisingly successful gathering with deeply engaged conversations. More importantly, we created a safe space for counselors to expose fragility and support one another.

After the event, I followed up with individual counselors and distributed feedback forms to ensure their voices were heard and to understand whether their questions and challenges had been meaningfully addressed, and started to recruit volunteers to make it a sustainable event in the future.

My leadership style is rooted in observation and responsiveness. I am highly attentive to people's needs

and feedback, and I translate those insights into action through reflection and follow-up plans. I listen carefully when collaborating, adapt ideas that better serve the team, and step back when it supports stronger collective outcomes. When we were stuck in making progress, I always initiated ideas to push the progress moving forward. A similar approach guides my leadership roles in China ICAC, Greater Bay Area Connect, Shanghai Counselors Connect, Shanghai city fair collaboration, and as a moderator and session leader at conferences.

**Understanding of the Role & Sharing Innovations & Vision:**

*Please outline your understanding of this role by identifying your top three priorities, why they matter, and how you would address them. Include any innovative ideas, how you would measure success, and current practices you feel are effective.*

Although I am based in China, I have collaborated closely with the Dulwich schools and our sister schools across the world(Singapore, Seoul, New Zealand, Switzerland, UK). Outside of the Dulwich network, my work has consistently extended across the region. Through ACAMIS, I have collaborated with schools in Mongolia; partnered with counselors in Hong Kong and Macau to organize the second Greater Bay Area Connect event; and co-presented Elevation through Collaboration at ChinaICAC with counselors across Singapore, different cities in mainland China, and Hong Kong. At the International ACAC Institute in Jeju, I worked alongside counselors from Korea, Japan, and Singapore to present on higher education systems across our respective countries while representing developments in China.

As Chair of the China ICAC Research, Scholarship, and Learning Committee, I have led the Leadership Institute program, recruiting counselors and admissions officers from nine countries to explore core counseling competencies that support students' long-term success from high school to university. The guest speakers/instructors are from a broader counselor's community all around the world.

These experiences have shaped my understanding of the Regional Representative role as one centered on connection, communication, and stewardship. I am a natural collaborator who brings people together across geographic and institutional boundaries, and I prioritize building networks where counselors feel supported and empowered to contribute.

Having grown up in a traditional Chinese family, experienced the Gaokao system, and attended university in China, I never imagined dedicating my career to international education. Today, supporting students representing more than 40 countries and collaborating with peers worldwide has become both a privilege and a responsibility.

My priority is to strengthen sustainable support systems through innovative in-person and virtual programming so counselors are not afraid to expose fragility and can continually rediscover motivation and energy from one another. I see this role not only as an opportunity to serve the region, but as a professional responsibility to listen carefully, represent voices thoughtfully, and help strengthen a community where every counselor feels supported and connected.

**Advocacy Priorities in College Admissions or International Education:**

*Identify and articulate a critical issue in college admissions for international students that you would like to or have championed, emphasizing its importance and potential impact on the community.*

I recognize that the voting rate in Region 2 has historically been among the lowest. While many International ACAC members, particularly in China, actively attend annual conferences, fewer participate in decision-making processes or engage consistently with other initiatives.

One of my priorities would be to deepen collaboration between International ACAC and local counseling communities to increase awareness of available resources, expand meaningful engagement, and encourage participation in volunteer leadership opportunities.

I am equally committed to supporting counselor communities that lack strong professional networks. Some existing groups operate primarily through messaging platforms and become active only when questions arise or when university fairs are shared. I aim to support these communities by guiding more interactive, in-person gatherings that foster trust, collaboration, and professional learning.

Even after relocating to Shanghai, I have continued supporting the Greater Bay Area Connect event and helping manage the Shenzhen counselors' WeChat group. Looking ahead, I hope to further connect counselors across regions through shared learning opportunities such as the Leadership Institute program.

I am also interested in exploring innovative partnerships with local institutions and resources. For example, I have begun connecting with universities and Shanghai-based university centers as potential sponsors or hosts for future counselor connect events. A neutral venue paired with structured professional learning can attract broader participation while strengthening regional ties.

Lastly, I see an opportunity to better support one-person counseling offices and independent educational consultants, particularly those with prior admissions or university experience in China. Developing targeted sub-networks for these professionals would help ensure they remain connected to the broader community and supported in their work.