



# INTERNATIONAL ACAC REGIONAL COUNCIL

## Application for Region 8 Representative

**Name:** Chris Payne

**Professional Title:** University Guidance Counsellor

**Institution/Organization:** Collingwood School

**Institution/Organization Location:** Canada

[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 commitment to International ACAC is defined by long-term service during pivotal moments of organizational change. I have been an active volunteer for nearly a decade, most notably serving a full six-year term on the Admissions Practices (AP) Committee from July 2019 to July 2025. During my tenure on the AP Committee, I worked closely with the VP for Admissions Practices to navigate one of the most challenging periods in our association's history: the transition from a rules-based enforcement model to an education-focused model following the Department of Justice injunction. This experience required a nuanced understanding of our governance structure, a commitment to high ethical standards, and the ability to listen to diverse member concerns during a time of uncertainty. Additionally, I contributed to the association's operational health by participating in multiple membership audits to ensure data integrity. Building on this governance experience, I transitioned into educational leadership within the organization. I served as Faculty for the Pre-Conference Ethics stream at the 2024 Annual Conference, where I developed and taught curriculum to guide colleagues through complex professional dilemmas. I have also served as a formal Mentor within the association, supporting new admission and high school counselors as they enter the field. Most recently, I was appointed to the Regional Council for Region 8 (USA & Canada) in November 2025. As an inaugural member of this newly formed body, I have spent the last few months helping to shape the Council's direction, establishing workflows for gathering member feedback, and preparing for the full implementation of the Council's mandate. These experiences have uniquely prepared me to continue this work for a full three-year term. My time on the AP Committee gave me a macro level view of the salient issues affecting our global membership, while my current interim role on the Council has provided me with a functional head start. I possess the institutional

memory, the working relationships with the Board, and the strategic mindset necessary to ensure Region 8 is effectively represented from day one.

**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.*

My leadership philosophy is rooted in collaboration, inclusivity, and active listening. Whether managing professional staff across multiple continents or coordinating volunteer committees, I believe effective leadership is not about directing from the top, but about building the infrastructure for others to succeed. My experience managing diverse, distributed teams directly applies to the Regional Council's global mandate. As the Manager of International Student Recruitment at the University of British Columbia (UBC), I managed four regional representatives stationed in Boston, Sao Paolo, Dubai, and Nairobi. Leading a team across vastly different time zones and cultural contexts taught me the importance of clear, transparent communication and trust-based management. I supported their autonomy while ensuring we met our collective goals—a skill set that is essential for a Regional Council that must function effectively between virtual and in-person meetings. I have a track record of creating spaces for collaboration where none existed. At Collingwood School, I identified a need for better access to US universities for our local students. I created and organized the North Shore US College Fair, coordinating 60 colleges and 400 attendees. Similarly, I launched the school's first Admissions Case Studies events. These initiatives required leading by influence—convincing universities to attend and mobilizing local families—demonstrating my ability to execute complex, multi-stakeholder projects. Leaders must actively seek out the voices of those they serve. At UBC, I co-founded the Counsellor Advisory Initiative, a group that provided quarterly survey feedback on our admissions practices. This formalized feedback loop ensured that our decisions were data-driven and responsive to the community's needs. I intend to replicate this model as Regional Representative to ensure Region 8's voice is heard. In my volunteer service, I focus on education and mentorship. During my six years on the Admissions Practices Committee, I assisted in steering the group from a stance of "enforcement" to "education" following the DOJ injunction. This required patience and empathy, helping members understand complex ethical shifts without feeling policed. Furthermore, acting as a Mentor for new counselors and serving as Faculty for the Pre Conference Ethics stream highlights my dedication to lifting up the next generation of leaders within our association.

**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.*

Understanding of the Role As the incumbent Regional Representative for Region 8 (USA & Canada) since November 2025, I view this role as the vital connective tissue between our region's diverse membership

and the Executive Board. It is not merely a reporting position; it is an active advocacy role. The Representative must translate the distinct "on-the-ground" realities of the US and Canada—ranging from shifting visa policies to curriculum changes—into actionable insights for the Vice President for Global Affairs.

**Priorities and Vision** My primary vision is to shift from "reactive" to "proactive" representation. **Data-Driven Advocacy:** I will prioritize formalizing how we gather member sentiment. Drawing on my experience co-founding the Counsellor Advisory Initiative at UBC, I plan to implement "Regional Pulse Checks"—short, quarterly surveys that allow members to flag issues before they become crises. Region 8 is vast. A priority is ensuring that Canadian-specific issues are not overshadowed by the sheer volume of US-centric concerns, and vice versa. My experience working on both sides of the border positions me well to balance these perspectives. The greatest challenge in Region 8 is its heterogeneity. We represent everything from large public universities to small rural boarding schools. The risk is that the "loudest" voices dominate the agenda. To mitigate this, I will actively solicit feedback from underrepresented pockets of our membership, ensuring our yearly report to the Board reflects the full spectrum of our region, not just the majority view. To strengthen our network, I propose two key innovations: **Virtual "Office Hours":** Beyond formal meetings, I will host informal drop-in sessions for members to discuss localized challenges.

**Resource Sharing Hubs:** Leveraging my experience organizing the North Shore US College Fair, I want to facilitate better peer-to-peer resource sharing for event planning, helping members replicate successful local events in their own sub-regions.

The establishment of the Regional Council itself is a massive step forward. The current practice of aligning Regional Representatives directly with the VP for Global Affairs is effective; I intend to deepen this by ensuring our regional reports are not just read, but acted upon, creating a transparent "action log" so members can see how their feedback influences Board decisions.

**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.*

The single most critical issue facing Region 8 is the destabilization of student mobility due to restrictive government policies. In Canada, we are grappling with the "hard cap" on international study permits, which has created a bottleneck of confusion for students and a crisis of funding for institutions. In the United States, growing political unrest and unpredictable shifts in visa vetting protocols are creating a climate of fear, where students question not just if they can get a visa, but if they will be safe and welcome if they do. For the first time in decades, both "halves" of our region are facing simultaneous threats to their openness. The result is that Region 8, traditionally the world's most stable educational destination, is becoming a source of anxiety for families globally.

As Regional Representative, I will not simply "monitor" these situations; I will actively mobilize the

Council to address them through three specific layers of collaboration: We must counter political rhetoric with educational reality. I will work with the Executive Board and the Advocacy & Outreach Committee to produce "Impact Briefs"—concise, data-backed documents illustrating how visa caps and revocations harm not just universities, but local economies. Drawing on my experience managing recruitment budgets, I know that numbers speak louder than sentiments. We need to arm our members with the data to lobby their own administrations and local governments effectively. International ACAC cannot fight these battles alone. I will prioritize collaboration with domestic heavyweights like NACAC and its regional affiliates. These organizations have powerful government relations arms that we often underutilize. By aligning our messaging with theirs, we can ensure that the "international student perspective" is included in their domestic lobbying efforts in Washington and Ottawa. We cannot fix government policy overnight, but we can ensure no counselor in our region is navigating these changes in the dark. The era of easy mobility is over. Region 8 requires a representative who is not afraid to name these challenges and has the operational experience to organize a response. My goal is to ensure that while borders may tighten, our community's support for one another only grows stronger.