



2022 Executive Board Election Candidate

Vice President for Finance

Name: Shilpa Gupta

Title: University Advisor

Institution: UWC ISAK Japan

Location/Region: Japan/East Asia

Member Group: Secondary (High School)

Background and Experience

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

5- 8 years

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

Executive Board- Delegate: I have been on the Executive board since 2020 as a delegate to NACAC assembly and have been an active member of all meetings and have volunteered for various projects and conference planning. Co-chair- Service committee(2022): Volunteered to co-chair the service committee which would be responsible for raffle, 5k run and Golf scramble. Chair-Conference bursaries: Since the last two years I have been serving as a Chair of conference bursaries coordinating with a committee of 7 members to select applicants eligible for bursaries to cover the cost of attending the conference. South Asia Regional Institute Host co-ordinator and Planning Committee member: Hosted the South Asia Regional Institute in October 2018 organised by International ACAC. Board representative for DEIJ focus group: Volunteered to be the board representative on all DEI discussions with an external consultant. IC3 Conference committee member: Have been serving on the Planning committee since the last 3 years. Also been serving on the University Outreach committee and Research

and Content committee for the past year. Finance Committee-working member(2019-20) – International ACAC: Reviewing financial matters and advising the Executive Board on opportunities to create and manage matters relating to sponsorships, advertising, scholarship funds, and conference exhibitors. Advisory board – CIALFO (Oct 2018 - March 2020): Responsible for advising Cialfo on feature upgrades that are essential for fulfilling the needs of the international counselor community and on overall strategy and direction that will best help its mission of democratizing access to college education, with a special focus on enabling greater access to college counseling.

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 have been involved in the field of education for the last 19 years and in the field of college counseling for the last 7 years. Currently, I am at UWC in Japan working with an amazing group of students from 84 different nationalities and colleagues from 20 countries. I became a member of International ACAC and NACAC in 2015 and have been one ever since. In the last 7 years, I have attended all the International ACAC summer conferences and the NACAC conferences. I have also been an active committee member of the International Career and College Counseling for the last 6 years and one of the founding members in planning the conference. In Oct 2018, I was the campus host and leader for the South Asia Regional Institute which saw a participation of over 150 delegates and 15 scholars. I have also presented for Webinar Wednesday on networking. I have been presenting at all summer conferences and regional institutes from topics on financial aid to letters of recommendations to set up a college counseling cell and guidance on multiple country applications. I have also been actively engaged online with educators across the world through webinars and have conducted various college advising workshops for students, parents, and colleagues from other schools to build up a culture of having a college counseling office at every institution. All these professional experiences have been instrumental in building my wealth of knowledge and I am now able to provide meaningful guidance to students for their college and career choices and support them to get into their top choice school with or without funding.

VP Finance Specific Questions

Please describe your familiarity with budgets and finance. In particular, please list or discuss any financial projects you have led.

A. Host and On-site coordinator and Chair for Logistics in College Fair, South Asia Regional

Institute of International ACAC- October 19-21, 2018. Handled all finance related planning for conference costs and scholarships. I also coordinated with local restaurants and event coordinators to help us stick to the budget laid out by International ACAC. I was able to organise the whole institute within the budget and also give the attendees a very pleasant experience. B. IC3 scholarship, diversity and Inclusion committee (member) - Supporting IC3 with identifying colleagues who can benefit with the IC3 institute and supporting them to gain scholarships for attending the conference. C. Chair of Conference bursaries (2020 & 2021) - Incharge of identifying attendees who were eligible for conference bursary. D. Was a working member of the Finance committee in 2019 - Reviewed financial matters and advised the Executive Board on opportunities to create and manage matters relating to sponsorships, advertising, scholarship funds, and conference exhibitors. Was directly in charge of the exhibit subcommittee and the scholarship subcommittee.

Please describe your work with marketing and fundraising. In particular, please list or discuss any projects or campaigns that you have led and evaluate the success of the activities.

Marketing experience: A. Lead marketing strategist for the new campus of an international school in India. Was involved in making budgets for different advertising campaigns, liaised with local newspapers and educational institutes for various promotional activities. B. IC3 Rebuild campaign: As a member of IC3 scholarship committee, we are responsible for placing upcoming counselors who lost their loved ones to the pandemic under the IC3 Rebuild program. I am helping in reaching out to schools to place the candidates. Fundraising experience: A. Bake sales & Fun fair at an international school in India: Given my Math and Engineering background, I was incharge of taking care of the finances for the annual bake sales and Fun fair. That included creating tickets, collection boxes, spreadsheets for teachers and involving the accounts team for counting. Each event saw a collection of 1000 USD - 5000 USD B. HUGS - Helped raise funds for my daughter's startup by selling second hand books and creating a business plan

Please describe any ideas you have for the future direction of this position, or specific initiatives you would like to develop. This may include this specific position, or may be in collaboration with another Vice President. Be as detailed as possible.

As a VP of Finance committee, a lot of responsibility lies with ensuring smooth functioning of the board keeping in mind all expenses. A lot of our funds come from the conference participation and in the last two years, there has been some concerns with the budget. I feel that we need to find alternate ways of generating funds for the organisation so that we are not relying on the conference alone. Also, our funds need to be leveraged by thinking of activities

related to our mission. Some examples could be:

1. Creating a certification program for new counselors - This can be a subsidised program for new counselors in the industry who can benefit from the expertise of the organisation members while also receiving a college counseling certification. We can also have certain workshops/modules at a cost - (example- An overview of UK applications for a fee of 10 USD)
2. Having more paid programming at the conference - Currently we have raffles, 5K run and Golf scramble. We can add a few more activities like online Tambola/Bingo, scrabble, sudoku. This can open a few days before the conference and stay for a week. Participants will pay a small fee of 1-2 usd to play the game and the winners can have gifts given by the sponsors.
3. Some other ideas would be to increase sponsors during conferences with having a 'Pay what you can' model. But also not going overboard and making the conference a promotional space.

Part of this position is managing people, committees, and projects. What is your experience in this area? Describe your management style. How do you like to be managed?

With over 18 years in education as a Math educator, college advisor, Deputy head of school and EB member of International ACAC, I have handled multiple projects and supervised many. High school side: I have successfully established the college counseling office at two institutions. My past experiences and responsibilities have included: setting up a college counseling centre, setting up Math and Science departments, devising and committing to the implementation of strategic plans and policies, liaising with institution board and parents, holding regular staff meetings and assemblies, chairing steering committees, staff recruitment and retention, resourcing and developing curricula, professional development for staff, in-service training, timetable construction, budgeting, ensuring differentiation of materials and tasks across the age and ability ranges, organizing major school events, organizing boarding and co-curricular activities. International ACAC EB member: As a board member, I was appointed to chair the Conference bursaries working committee for 2 years. I organised regular meetings with our members to discuss the evaluation process, survey forms, budgeting and ensured diversity of individuals. As a manager, I strive to build an enthusiastic, strong 'team' at all levels where the sharing of good ideas is encouraged and solid support given where needed. Relevant and realistic aims and objectives are given to my colleagues to maintain focus and encourage good time management. I have a positive, inter-personal management style, and know when a measured degree of firmness is required. I believe that part of being an effective manager requires motivational skills and commitment to raising levels of achievement. Positivism in all interactions with students, colleagues, and parents, no matter how challenging the situation may be, is necessary to maintain high morale and trust. A sense of humor is essential. My main

past management challenges have been to build strong teams and deal with parental concerns, the latter being the most difficult and time-consuming and requiring measured degrees of diplomacy. I feel that having a calm, directive manner and the ability to inspire confidence during interactions with colleagues, students and parents to be one of my strengths.

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?

I was one of the board representatives working with the group during the DEI organization assessment. Those meetings were a huge learning experience to understand how members from different regions have varied opinions and how essential it is to have an environment within the organization that is diverse and yet be inclusive. Impactful takeaways: The lowest survey score (3.45) was on equal opportunity and whether members agreed that they have equal opportunity for leadership (i.e. Board and Committees) positions. This clearly demonstrates that we need to increase member engagement and have a restructuring of the volunteer process. A lot of frustration came from members who wanted to volunteer for the committee/board but were never chosen. I feel it is essential to respect all applicants and find a way within the organization to involve them for various duties. A significant number of questions in the survey had high response rates of "neutral or don't know" (20%-34%). This may indicate that many members are not engaged or informed, and/or member communications have not been effective. Also, less than 50% members open the email communication. Going forward effective communication is the key!! Strategic planning with a focus on Member engagement and communication • Diversity and representation • Leadership and member development • Communication strategy and plan for the current organizational change process. To support a diverse and successful organization, it is extremely essential to prioritise selection of diverse members and make sure to create an environment which is collaborative, supportive, and respectful to increase the participation and contribution of all members. This will not only increase better understanding of various cultures but will also increase the productivity of the organization. Any member who feels included will automatically feel more responsible for working for the organization and making it the best. Also having a workforce composed of people with different backgrounds, experiences and skills means the ideas generated by these teams won't be cognate – they'll be innovative and creative. As a female from a national high school in India (a country that forms the second-largest population of international students going abroad) and now a UWC member which thrives on diversity, I will add much needed diversity and bring a different voice to the Board. Few steps that the Executive board can take: a.

Identify the under-represented regions of the world and reach out to have a more diverse member body. Connect underrepresented members with internal and external mentors in their group to provide support and promote growth. Encourage their conference participation by providing scholarships. b. Acknowledge a variety of upcoming religious and cultural holidays and help members keep track of multicultural celebrations. c. Make a conscious effort to develop future leaders from all backgrounds and age groups.d. Encourage everyone to approach diversity from multiple angles by broadcasting webinars for the same and having open conversations at conferences during lunch hour or networking breaks. Allow people to speak up and get constructive feedback. e. Look at everything with the following viewpoint, 'Have we created conditions where every person can contribute in their unique, meaningful way and feel safe and secure doing that?' and if we find places where that's not the case, having the courage to admit that and work to change it,"

All Applicant Questions

Please provide a maximum 250 word statement of why you wish to run for the International ACAC Board, and other relevant information you would like members to know about you that you have not previously shared in this application. Your statement will be shared with the general membership if you are slated for a position.

As a current board member from Asia, I felt that my voice was highly appreciated and I would continue to represent my region and voice their opinions during our board meetings. With a strong background in Math and numbers, I feel that I am equipped to handle the Finance side of the board functioning. As a new member of the UWC Japan community, I can see the lack of representation on the board and the International ACAC community from this region especially Japan, Korea, Oceania. I would bring to the board various cultural and educational perspectives, and know-how of the community which is itself so diverse. Working with students from 85 different nationalities and colleagues from 25 countries, I have developed skills to be inclusive and respectful of all cultures. With ongoing DEI training provided by International ACAC and UWC network, I am confident that I can bring the much needed diversity and a new and previously unheard voice to the Board.I have built a strong network with the schools in the South and East Asia region, local community and members of International ACAC by presenting at conferences, volunteering for board duties, organising university fairs and doing webinars for International ACAC and IC3 institutes. As a volunteer driven organisation with a mission to facilitate global interaction while promoting professional standards that fosters ethical and social responsibility, I hope to sustain the organisation by optimising budget to ensure growth and continue serving the community with a focus on putting the revenue generated back into the organization to keep it (and its programs) running to fulfil its societal purpose.