



Application for President-Elect

Name: Megan Mankerian-Stem

Professional Title: Founder and Executive Director

Institution/Organization: Global Leaders Collective, LLC

Institution/Organization Location: United States

Membership Type: Individual: Associate

[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.

As a current member of the Executive Board, I have taken on several leadership projects in the last year and a half, including building and launching the Member Conduct Form, as well as leading the search committee for the Executive Director role. Looking ahead to the future of the organization, I want to continue this work as we consider building a strong HQ team that not only supports our membership now, but also in the future.

Additionally, in other important roles in the organization, I have been able to participate in many levels of volunteer work, with members across the globe, including being a member of the GNC, the ad-hoc DEI Committee, serving on faculty for the Pre-Conference Institute, supporting and being a mentor in the Mentor Year Program, and being a Scholar Mentor.

These volunteer experiences and others have created the foundation that I use in my role today on the Executive Board. As an organization that runs on the work of volunteers, it is important to understand the function and work of each program in International ACAC. I use these experiences and my connections to our members to guide my input in discussions and build action steps that look to the future of the organization.

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 grounded in servant leadership and a commitment to being proactive, strategic, and people-centered. This is evident in my current work on the Executive Board, as well as the leadership I show through my company, specifically with how I support and work with universities, high schools, and other stakeholders around the world.

In my leadership roles, I focus on clarity of purpose and outcomes, by making sure we have clear action steps towards any goal. I begin by establishing clear goals and building a team structure where every voice is heard. I prioritize structured agendas, actionable timelines, and data informed decisions to ensure we remain accountable.

To support and motivate teams, I emphasize inclusion and meaningful engagement and communication. I actively seek diverse perspectives, including past leaders and emerging voices, to encourage open dialogue. I foster collaboration by aligning work with both organizational priorities and individual strengths, ensuring members feel valued and invested in the outcomes.

My leadership effectiveness is reflected in my accomplishments, which include building and launching the Membership Conduct form and leading the search committee for the Executive Director role. Additionally, beyond the organization, through my work in supporting Globetrotters United for several years, building the Globe Trotting Slate Users forum, leading the Annual Salary and Staffing Industry Survey, building free professional development sessions for college counselors around the globe, and working with school-based counseling colleagues to pilot admissions education sessions in their schools.

Previous Experience in Volunteering:

Please outline your previous volunteer involvement and the skills, insights, or perspectives you have gained through service. Explain how these experiences have prepared you to contribute meaningfully to the work of this organization.

Currently, I am a Representative to the Executive Board, and have spearheaded a few initiatives in the last 18 months of service. This includes building and launching the Member Conduct Form, found on the International ACAC website, as well as currently leading the search committee for the Executive Director.

Additionally, I have volunteered in several other capacities in the organization, including being a member of the ad-hoc DEI Committee, serving on faculty for the Pre-Conference Institute, leading and participating in many of the organization's webinars, facilitating several annual conference sessions, hybrid conference committee co-chair, Mentorship Year Program, Chatter that Matters session leader, Regional Round Up session leader, ad-hoc committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion member, Scholar Mentor, and am actively involved on our social media accounts.

Outside of International ACAC, I am involved in NAFSA as the MENA Member Interest Group co chair, and previously as the membership training co-lead, quarterly magazine contributor, annual conference presenter, conference open session leader, and, with CIS, as annual conference planning committee member, and annual and regional conference presenter.

Beyond formal organizations, I have also been the Globetrotters United admin, launched and continue to maintain the Globe Trotting Slate Users forum, run the annual Staffing and Salary Industry Survey, support job search in my GLC Forum, and continue to be actively involved in many of the social media groups in the industry.

I grew up in this industry, starting in international education directly after graduating with my bachelor's degree. Every volunteer experience I have been a part of has helped me grow into the professional that I am today, with each serving as a learning experience. I carry these lessons in every discussion and decision I make on the Executive Board, or within my own organization.

Being a volunteer means additional responsibilities above and beyond our daily responsibilities at work and at home, so I want to ensure that no matter how you decide you want to engage in the community, you are getting the experience and professional development you desire.

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.

My understanding of this role centers on advancing International ACAC's impact through strong membership growth, operational excellence, and future-focused leadership. My top three priorities reflect both strategic vision and practical execution.

Priority 1 & 2 (Linked): Strengthening Membership Growth and Engagement Through Smarter Systems and Processes

My first two priorities go hand in hand, and lean into my expertise of process flow and improvement. I want the Leadership Team, Executive Board, and HQ to be forward thinking in how we continue to approach encouraging new membership and keeping our current membership (at all levels) engaged in the organization.

With this comes the goal and the behind-the-scenes work that most of the membership does not see: reviewing our internal processes within HQ and the Board to make sure we are leveraging our technology tools efficiently and effectively. This will also help us streamline processes that support your daily needs as a member. Additionally, this will also help us ensure we are being fiscally responsible.

Priority 3: Building a Sustainable Leadership and Innovation Pipeline

My third priority is ensuring International ACAC remains future-ready by investing energy and ideas in leadership development and volunteer pathways. This includes empowering emerging leaders, strengthening succession planning, and encouraging innovation in programming as well as in partnerships and global outreach. I will work with the VP of Global Affairs to identify ways within the new regional council to promote emerging voices to remain involved in the organization and to continue to seek roles in leadership. Additionally, I will work to build opportunities through the regional council for more members to get involved in ways that support their local or regional communities.

Across all three priorities, my goal is to help International ACAC become more responsive, effective, and focused on what members truly need. I want to ensure we are using our time, resources, and energy wisely so we can better serve our community, focusing not just on today, but well into the future, with the care, relevance, and impact our members deserve.

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.

One critical issue that I have been championing for several years is building community and sustaining that community within our profession. We are at a moment in education when the work we do continues to expand: our jobs have become about the multiple hats we have to wear, and trying to find the necessary time to support our students and our work, often with diminishing budgets and support. This, coupled with instability in policies across several governments, is leading to high turnover rates and burnout in the industry on all sides of the desk, leading to an industry-wide retention issue.

I am concerned about the long-term impact on the industry if we do not intentionally support and retain new and emerging voices in the field. This affects institutional knowledge and continuity, and, in turn, has an effect on the students we support.

That is why I will prioritize creating and strengthening spaces for connection, mentorship, and belonging. We all recognize the power of the Annual Conference: a space to reflect, learn, celebrate, and connect with peers who understand the realities of our work. Regional Institutes offer similarly meaningful opportunities for professional growth and shared understanding, when they are accessible.

Having built and supported spaces to build virtual communities, as well as attending several Annual Conferences and Regional Institutes, I have seen firsthand how meaningful community can reignite passion, reduce isolation, support career development, and encourage professionals to remain in the field.

Building community is not just about networking. For me, it's about keeping good people in this field, supporting one another's wellbeing, making space for new voices, and ensuring we can continue showing up for international students with care, experience, and passion.

Supporting International ACAC's Strategic Plan:

Explain how you would leverage the position to contribute to International ACAC's strategic plan, aligning your goals with the organization's three pillars: enhancing member experience globally, clarifying the international brand, and optimizing internal operations.

As President-Elect, my focus will be on advancing the organization's three strategic pillars in ways that strengthen impact, visibility, and long-term sustainability in the following areas:

Enhancing Member Experience Globally

I envision International ACAC as a truly borderless professional home—where members across regions feel seen, supported, and empowered. I would champion expanded global engagement, regionally-responsive programming, and leadership pathways that elevate diverse voices, specifically working with the VP of Global Affairs and Regional Council to set goals and build initiatives that support their specific regions' needs.

Clarifying and Elevating the International Brand

I would work to elevate the organization's identity by amplifying thought leadership, strengthening partnerships, and increasing our presence in global policy and education conversations. By telling clearer, more compelling stories about our members' impact, we can reinforce trust, influence, and recognition worldwide. This would include considering working partnerships with organizations such as NAFSA.

Optimizing Internal Operations

As mentioned previously in my goals, as we continue to work to full staff HQ, I would work to make sure we are also reviewing our internal processes within HQ and the Board to make sure we are leveraging our technology tools efficiently and effectively. This will also help us ensure we are being fiscally responsible and mitigate any risk we may have as a non-profit organization.

Additionally, the previous strategic plan was published in 2022, and I would work with the Executive Board and HQ to not only review how we have implemented the recommendations, but also start to work towards an updated plan. We are now in a time where our industry is rapidly changing, as is our membership, and we need to make sure our guiding documents support this.