



2023 Executive Board Election Candidate

Vice President for Inclusion, Access & Success

Name: Joyce Agyare

Title: Educational Consultant/Independent Counsellor

Institution: Joyce Agyare

Location/Region: Ghana/Africa, Sub-Saharan

Member Group: Individual

All Applicant Questions

Please provide a statement of why you wish to run for the International ACAC Board, and other relevant information you would like members to know about you.

Our association is at an exciting place, and as the first 'scholar' of International ACAC (which at the time was called the Overseas Association of College Admission Counselling, OACAC) I think that ensuring that inclusiveness is demonstrated in our Executive Board is very important. Our direction for inclusiveness and becoming truly international aligns with my personal goals to give back and to also continue to learn from an organization through which I have grown both professional and personally. As we look at our strategic goals and how we can create a strong and truly international brand, I would want to volunteer to be a part of that change as I serve as the VP for Inclusion, Access and Success. As a scholar myself and serving my term at the IAS committee, I've gained insights into what we want to achieve and how I think we can do that. As we select scholars, we want those that are underrepresented and do not have ready access to resources for our work to gain the necessary exposure. I think it is important for us to demonstrate that there are possibilities to serve at the highest level in our association also. In serving I will not only be giving back but will be a true example of what is possible and the kind

of composition of leadership we want as a global organization. Serving on the board is about believing in our mission, team work, being passionate, staying connected and committed, having a listening ear, being innovative, open-minded and solution-oriented. I have acquired these qualities over the years from the many ways I've served our organization and from my work. I have shared many ways we can improve our Scholar program and even go beyond that in order to reflect the change our world is experiencing after the pandemic – it is truly a global village that we live in and collaborating, listening to different opinions, celebrating our differences while we learn professionally from each other will make us stronger and better. As a former scholar I understand the issues of inclusion access and success having experienced them first hand and I hope to make an impactful and meaningful contribution as I work with others to improve our program.

Background and Experience

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

10+ years

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

Serving a year's term on the Executive Board as a Delegate in this changing role has been a great experience. My decision to apply to serve in the VP for Inclusion, Access and Success Committee role, where I'm serving a 2nd term as a committee member with several responsibilities, hinges on competences gained over many years and my belief in our association's direction and its inclusion and access agenda and what I can contribute coming from an underrepresented region. My professional experience includes but is not limited to implementing an International (IB) School Guidance Counselling Program and heading the department for 10 years, running my business as an Independent Educational Consultant (16 years), consulting for schools in counselling and working as an Education Consultant in Western Africa and other markets for Scholastic Inc. I have thus gained leadership and teamwork skills, open-mindedness, and innovativeness and I'm purpose-driven. At International ACAC I've been Project Manager for the 2nd Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Institute where I assembled a fantastic team for an amazing conference, I've served on the Membership committee and several others. I'm also Project Chair for a \$700,000 alumni project to keep girls in high school, an Executive Committee member for a women's professional association and serve as Board Chair for girl empowerment. I understand sticking with an agreed agenda to fit a specific purpose. My stewardship to others, eagerness to give back and participate in deep conversations for change is what I bring to the board of our great organization.

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.

My work has enabled me to collaborate internationally regularly, both within Africa and overseas. The positive impact I've experienced has changed my outlook and given me extensive exposure to different ways of seeing. I've learnt the importance of other voices and celebrating differences and my cultural awareness has been sharpened. IMPACT For my HALI students, I've worked with many International ACAC members to better understand inclusion and access issues such students face with many successful outcomes. As Project Manager we introduced the first pre-conference for regional institutes Membership Committee member - we initiated in-depth analysis of the geographical distribution of members to help look at diversity issues. I've nominated scholars, read applications, mentored and volunteered to review our Visa Policy Statement to solve visa issues for scholars • INVOLVEMENT • NACAC Delegate 2022-2023 COMMITTEES LEADERSHIP First Timer's Co-chair 2023 • Project Manager - Sub-Saharan Africa Institute, October 2019 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS • Inclusion, Access and Success 2019 to date (2nd term) o Sub-committee for Visa Orientation Team o Scholar application reader • Governance and Nominating – 2020-2021 • Membership - 2017-2019 • Mentor for Scholars Program 2017 to date CONFERENCES o Programming Committee 2021 o Session Review Committee 2016 o Volunteer – First Timer's Meeting o Give Raffle Donations Most recent Conference presentations (Topics in CV) • 2022 – Panelist - Future Now - the New EdTech Revolution ... • 2020 Conference Panel Lead (What's up... Update on Africa • 2020 Conference Panelist (Difficult Conversations: about diversity) • 2019 Chatter that Matters – Financial Aid for International Students

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 was a member of NACAC for a few years earlier on in my career and during that period my work with HALI students gained recognition because of the impact I was making as an International ACAC member (then OACAC). As a result, I was awarded the International Humanitarian Award at a NACAC Conference and gave a presentation at our meeting there. The scholarship left a mark on me, giving me the assurance that I had support in navigating as a new counsellor from an underserved region. I rejoined NACAC in 2020. My desire to learn more about our affiliation with NACAC and its work in order to represent our members and their views, resulted in my applying for the NACAC Delegate position to serve for a year. Attending last year's NACAC conference as a member of the Executive Board, I have become more aware of the ongoing changes and how I can contribute to conversations about what the new 'delegate' position should be. I'm very interested in the GWI (Guiding the Way to Inclusion) Conference and hope to have our deliberations as an association shared there when given the opportunity. Our new direction as an association and NACAC's mission of improving access for students is very much in line with my own passion coming particularly from Sub-Saharan Africa where many qualified students never get access to higher education.

VP for Inclusion, Access, & Success Specific Questions

Please share any inclusion or access initiatives or events you have participated in or led as they relate to higher education (e.g.: financial aid workshops, community-based organization involvement, etc.) and any success you have had. Beyond the International ACAC Scholar Program, what are other ways International ACAC can support inclusion and access to our community?

I have worked on several fronts in areas associated with inclusion and access to higher education. Professionally I help schools set up Guidance Counselling Departments and that work entails organizing college applications and financial aid workshops for students and parents, providing direction for new counsellors in the college admissions space and consulting for schools to improve access to opportunities in higher education. Where I work these sessions have a huge impact because of the lack of expertise in this area. I'm also spearheading a \$700,000 alumni project as chairperson, to help keep as many girls in high school as possible. In Ghana the government has instituted a Free Senior High School policy, but there's no space for students, particularly disadvantaged girls and we're building a dormitory so more girls can go to high school - <https://slopsaaccra.com/our-projects/>. I'm also the Board Chair of Elevate Network, a Youth Development movement. I speak at their 'Power of You' conferences and events around the year. I provide mentorship and career advice too about higher education possibilities. I'm building a database on careers and tertiary education options for high school students to help give them access to much needed information and advice. There's nothing like that here for students where this lack of information creates ignorance about basic facts about opportunities. Aside the scholar's program International ACAC access to our community can be created if we organize periodic virtual sessions for non-members about who we are as an organization and the offerings available in higher education. Social media is a powerful tool for this. We can collaborate with other like-minded organizations for better global impact in delivering free professional development and consider regional representation for better local impact e.g., support an Africa ACAC idea. Regarding access, we need to have checking systems on how inclusive we are by opening up leadership for the underrepresented.

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.

Serving a 2nd term on this committee I've had a lot of experience in the workings of the committee and seen its growth. I have a few ideas about how we can better deliver our mandate of inclusiveness and access. It's been a fantastic experience and I see myself building on the hard work my predecessors have done. I think we should have clear goals and create a basis for measuring our success as a committee looking at our 3 pillars – Inclusion, Access and Success. This will help us know where our gaps are. We need to ask the question about which individual actions show that we are being inclusive and creating access. Areas where we can

work - Sponsor more scholars to attend or to become members – we can ask more partners (colleges) to sponsor since we deny some qualified candidates every year. Can work with Membership Committee's goal of improving memberships from certain regions. Identify members as local reps to get more scholars to help us cover more countries – this year we had too many applications from one African country. We can give professional development virtually but in a more organized fashion and offer certificates for completion of sessions – this is important because professional development in underserved areas is almost non-existent. This can be done in collaboration with our PD committee as we already have sessions. I think inclusiveness is also about having conversations about how to intentionally include underrepresented people in leadership in a fair way – a DEIJ collaboration. I also see Delegates supporting in all these areas.

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?

I've run an office for many years and work with a team of people with different levels of experience. I have managed many projects, whether it is helping a school with their guidance program or offering professional development, running a regional institute at International ACAC or doing a conference session and more. Also managing a committee of over 50 volunteers working under different sub-committees and being one of the chief fund raisers for our \$700,000 alumni project to create access for girls to get the opportunity for high school education has taught me a lot about leading teams. In my opinion leading a committee or project is about getting everybody to focus on the vision, mandate or a clearly defined goal and that calls the leader building trust. It is also about effective consultation and collaboration. Everybody needs to be given the chance to speak and deserves to be listened to. I like to give people room to tackle responsibilities using their own innovativeness. It is important to also understand and be aware of how different people communicate so that allowance is made for that, as not everybody will speak up per say. Also, in leading I like to give others the chance to shine and show their strengths in what we are trying to deliver. I see the need to do all this within the arena of our cultural differences. I prefer meetings that are guided and purposeful for better efficiency and prefer to encourage openness. In being managed I like to be given the chance to share my opinion and to contribute where I can. I also find it important to clearly understand what is being communicated just so I can deliver and serve others better. In all great team effort and a celebration of differences always wins.

Name your three most impactful takeaways from the December 2020 DEIJ 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'm excited about the fact that our organization is living up to its name as being 'international' by intentionally recognizing the importance of the DEIJ conversation and taking steps to address

the issues at stake. The three impactful takeaways for me are from the DEIJ Pentagon: The recognition of the importance of a DEIJ Structure and Strategy that is tangible and accessible to every member – this will help everybody have a thorough understanding of International ACAC's agenda in this all-important area. Diverse Representation - the recognition to intentionally diversify is impactful as it will make International ACAC truly international by nature with all voices represented. Creating a DEI standing committee in 2021 has been a fantastic move in the right direction to move this conversation forward and address action issues in this area. Leadership Development – this is an important factor because whereas leadership skills for professionals like us can be assumed, there are members who need support to sharpen their leadership skills to enable them embrace the call to lead and serve. This will ensure everybody who wants to, has the opportunity to lead. To advance this conversation we ought to recognize the DEIJ factor in everything, whether it is a conference session or the make-up of a committee or persons in leadership. I think the Executive Board apart from ensuring the full implementation of the DEIJ Pentagon, should assess its effectiveness periodically and ensure the exercise does not end with this special initiative but that it permeates the very fabric of IACAC. Our board can continue to work to ensure serving members have a DEI mindset.