



2025 Executive Board Election Candidate

Vice President for Admissions Practices

Name: Claire Wilkins

Title: Head of University Guidance

Institution: German Swiss International School

Location/Region: Hong Kong/East Asia

Member Group: Secondary

Applicant Questions

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 longstanding member of IACAC one of my main goals has been to actively promote change and advocate for students, while finding consensus on how to ethically support, recruit and enroll them to colleges and universities. Have taken a few years to settle into the more senior role in my school and to work on developing my team and our curriculum, I would now would like to return to giving back to the organisation as a whole and using my influence to advocate for international students and professional standards.

In my career I have held a variety of roles in higher education from overseeing the development of an overseas campus, acting as Director of International Admission, and now as Head of University Guidance I have experienced both 'sides of the desk'. I have also worked within the classroom at both the school and university level. Along the way I have trained admissions professionals on both sides and continually worked towards the development of policies and practices that would benefit both students and institutions. Previously I have participated in two IACAC Committees, volunteered at a pre conference and as a mentor, collaborated on presentations at numerous conferences, as well acted as a visiting faculty member of the College Board Summer Institutes held at NYU and NYU Shanghai.

With a strong understanding of professional practices, strong personal ethics and feeling of

responsibility for international students, I feel that the VP of Admissions Practices is the ideal role for me to continue to passionately pursue the development and education of ethical admissions and enrolment practices while advocating for the students supported by our ever-widening organisation.

Detail experiences that have equipped you with skills and insights applicable to the position you're applying for, including your leadership philosophy and strategies for effectively managing and leading a volunteer committee, emphasizing communication, collaboration, and recognition, and transferable accomplishments.

A former international student, international admissions rep, and university counsellor, my experiences, personal and professional have equipped me with skills and insights that are beneficial for this position. Intercultural communication and collaboration, problem solving, and leadership skills coupled with a strong and personal desire to do what is best and right will help me work across committees and within membership to achieve the goals of the Admissions Practices Committee, while contributing to those of the overall organisation. As an active participant in various professional groups emphasizing the sharing of information, advocacy of students, and mutual understanding of processes and policies I have been incredibly vocal when it comes to upholding professional standards and implementing ethical policies.

I have worked at the enrolment policy level with Provosts and Deans, as well as in the weeds with operations, marketing, recruitment and admissions teams. And now, I have spent the last half decade seeing things through the eyes of the student and the school again. I have fought for fair and transparent English language, flexible testing and credit granting policies to include as many international curricula as possible, connecting with on the ground experts to develop a true understanding. I have trained staff not only at my own institutions but others to help them develop similar policies expanding access to international students. I spent two years creating a clear and visible tool for international students (and international readers) to use to determine their eligibility and to access admission, which has been duplicated by other institutions. Collaborating on multiple panels and presentations, I have tried to bring both sides of the desk together, including operations staff, to further look behind the curtain of processes to encourage transparency and efficiency. During my time within universities, I also worked to implement better communications strategies within university admissions in my institutions to lessen the anxiety around deadlines and application requirements. I have also fought for better recognition of international student credentials in scholarship funding.

In all roles I have emphasised collaboration and the sharing of information, fueled by a belief that communication and a combined effort can help impact change.

Outline your comprehension of the role you are applying for, specifying priority areas, overall vision and challenges that you would like to address, and innovative solutions you would like to implement, while acknowledging current practices or programs you feel are effective.

As chairperson of the Admissions Practices Committee, and a part of the larger Executive Board in collaboration with other committees, I would look forward to collectively working

toward educating admission and counseling professionals and their institutions regarding the nature of ethical standards as and promote awareness of ethical practices among students and their families.

Best practices should ensure good outcomes for all, but they need to be transparent and follow ethical guidelines. Transparent policies that do not assume that all students, or all international students are alike. Meeting students where they are with thoughtful policies and language and remembers we are dealing with young adults, some of whom have little to no support in the process, but who will all be valuable members of our communities. Removing unnecessary, confusing or discriminatory practices is vital in providing access to a wider range of international students while improving the process for enrolment. Providing education to admissions/enrolment staff will allow for better application and admissions policies, perhaps also leading to more efficiency. Helping those who counsel students to better understand how and why decisions are made, and processes are implemented could help soften the impact of such policies and process, or allow easier explanation to students and parents.

My vision is to use the collective influence of the International ACAC organisation with its growing international membership to advocate for more ethical and sensitive admissions and enrolment practices to help our college and university members simultaneously reach their goals.

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.

In the past I have been a strong advocate for flexible and test optional policies as well as fair and transparent admissions practices. I have also been a loud voice advocating for students in a range of environments from application platform creation to university admission. I believe that my constant holding of organisations to account for their decisions has had an impact on how universities communicate with prospective applicants. My work with summer institutes has also helped university counselling colleagues better navigate for their students, and even advocate for themselves.

I believe in sharing information and expertise, not hoarding it, and being collaborative whenever possible.

For students I believe we should never be satisfied and always stand up for them. Some significant issues we are facing at the moment include the return to the requirement of admissions testing in the US, changes to the Canadian and UK admissions processes and the confusion and misinformation surrounding them. Another significant issue is that more and more students are applying to multiple countries simultaneously and the impact this may have on enrolment, deposits, advising and ethical decision making.

Not to mention the everchanging geopolitical climate impacting information, education and immigration around the globe. A collective voice and set of guidelines could assist those on all sides of the issue move forward together.

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.

Member experience would be enhanced through better, more consistent and transparent communication of the needs of the international student, those that counsel them, and those that seek to enrol them at institutions. In a time of so much misinformation I feel it is important to make sure that students and professionals can trust the information they are given, and that we work towards providing information in a meaningful, sensitive and accurate way to reduce the stress on all sides. Including more international voices will allow members to feel heard, and the organisation and brand to more truly reflect the membership and its international nature. Transparency and improved efficacy of our own internal operations will stand as an example to the external processes and policies that are implemented by our members whether in university admissions, or college counselling. Providing members with a dedicated area or platform for this ethical advice/standards/guidelines with for example a possible repository of example situations and responses may help streamline this education. Bringing different constituents together for more sharing, workshopping and training to ensure that membership is informed, educated and has a voice with regard to ethical standards and best practices in admission and enrolment, to better support students and families as well as enrolment goals would also be beneficial.