



2023 Executive Board Election Candidate

Vice President for Inclusion, Access & Success

Name: Erin Slocum

Title: University Guidance & Careers Counselor

Institution: Tanglin Trust School

Location/Region: Singapore/Southeast Asia & Oceania

Member Group: Secondary (High School)

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.

It is an honor to be on the slate for VP of Inclusion, Access, and Success. Access has been a passion and priority of mine since I first started my career in education over ten years ago as an Americorps Member working in an under-served public middle school in Boston. My work then was aimed at addressing high school graduation and dropout rates and it has evolved over time to focus on international higher education, with work experience as an admissions officer at the University of Rochester and as a school-based college counselor at Tanglin Trust School in Singapore. Through professional and volunteer roles, I have been able to connect high-achieving low-income international students with the scholarships and financial aid necessary to access high quality university degrees that will ultimately change the trajectory of their lives and communities. I have served on the IAS committee since July 2021 and am excited to deepen my commitment to the Scholars Program as the committee chair. I'm also involved in MYP as a mentor. My other access work includes volunteering as the Director of Selection and a guidance counselor for Second Chance and as a college counselor with the Matchlighters Scholars

Program. I have experience counseling students, reviewing applications, awarding scholarships, supervising a team of student employees, and managing a variety of projects and have key strengths in organization, process development, critical analysis, and cross-cultural communication. With passion, collaboration, and engagement, I hope to ensure the continued success of the Scholars Program.

Background and Experience

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

8-10 years

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

As an international education professional with over 10 years of experience, I bring insights from both university counseling and admissions to the role of VP for Inclusion, Access, and Success. I understand the logistics of applying to and receiving need-based financial aid at highly selective US institutions and have coordinated the selection of high-achieving low-income students in various programs. This experience is complemented by understanding the knowledge and demands of being a school-based university counselor which will ensure the Scholars Program continues to meet our counselors' needs. As Senior Counselor for International Admissions at the University of Rochester, I identified the top 1% of international students from over 100 countries who applied for financial aid and nominated them for full need financial packages in line with our budget and institutional priorities. I have continued to practice this skill for identifying top talent that aligns with specific mission and programmatic goals as an application reviewer for IAS and for the Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program, a youth study abroad program run by World Learning. I also serve as Director of Selection for Second Chance, a non-profit that supports exceptionally talented international students who do not have a viable admissions and financial aid offer by April 1 and connects them with full need scholarships starting the immediate fall term. My experience in counseling and admissions, combined with my passion for access, organization skills, and penchant for systems thinking will allow me to successfully run the committee and Scholars Program.

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.

A member of International ACAC since 2018, I have become increasingly more engaged in the community throughout the past 5 years. I attended the International ACAC Conferences in 2019,

2020 (virtual), 2021 (virtual), and 2022. I became a member of the IAS committee in July 2022 and have supported several subcommittees in the last year and a half. I have acted as the HALI liaison for the nomination process, reviewed applications, and supported the visa process, and this year I am serving as the Co-Chair for Scholar Orientation. In addition to my IAS responsibilities in Miami, I hope to present for the first time at International ACAC, as part of a panel presentation proposal. Outside of the IAS committee, I also participate in the International ACAC Mentor Year Program. Last year I was a mentee as I transitioned from admissions to college counseling, and this year I am mentoring a colleague through her application process and supporting her career transition as she switches sides of the desk. Since moving to Singapore, I have also attended the EARCOS conference in Bangkok and been an active participant in the Singapore Counselors Network through attending meetings, sharing information and best practices, and helping to organize the Lion City Fair in Sept 2022. I also volunteer with the College Essay Guy Matchlighters Scholars Program as a volunteer college counselor where I support an international student seeking admissions and financial aid in the US.

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 am not currently a member of NACAC.

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?

Access has been a passion and priority of mine since I first started my career in education, and I have worked to maintain and strengthen this connection to access throughout my various roles. As an Americorps member, I worked in an under-served public middle school and while teaching English in South Korea, I volunteered as the director of a local Fulbright Korea initiative that offered free English classes for low-income students. At Rochester, in addition to identifying and nominating applicants for financial aid, I designed international financial aid workshops and presented these workshops virtually for our global audience and in-person at local schools. Through my work with Second Chance, I serve as the Director of Selection and a pro bono guidance counselor. I streamlined and updated the application process, I lead application review, interview applicants, finalize the cohort, and support students through a fluid and extremely fast moving second round of universities applications. I also volunteer as a college counselor for the Matchlighters Scholars Program. The financial and institutional support that International ACAC lends to the Scholars Program is an incredible way to support inclusion and access and has far reaching effects through each of the Scholars' communities. Continuing to

support conference bursaries for national and regional conferences is another important piece of our access work. One area where International ACAC can continue to expand is through its membership and ensuring a wide range of counselors from currently underrepresented and underserved schools and countries have access to our professional community.

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.

I have enjoyed my time on the IAS committee and have found the committee and Scholars Program to be organized and well-run. I plan to maintain and build upon its strong foundation of member engagement through small changes to streamline processes and improve efficiency. One challenge I faced as a new member was not understanding how I could contribute, so I'd like to strengthen onboarding support for new members and ensure there is clear communication, distribution of meaningful tasks across members, and more ownership and delegation from subcommittee chairs. Some ways to improve efficiency would be to organize the IAS shared google drive and ensure it is being utilized as the centralized resource for all committee documents. A task/project management platform like Trello could be implemented to clarify responsibilities and track progress. We could streamline the application process by reviewing the application requirements, simplifying application review and refining the application instructions to cut down on ineligible applications that we have received in other languages and from staff who are not college counselors. There are many overlaps across committees, and I will work closely with other VPs to ensure the continued success of the Scholars Program, including: membership to ensure we are supporting unrepresented regions, finance to ensure our budget is on track, and DEI to ensure we are addressing the needs and challenges of counselors and students from under-resourced regions.

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?

Through my roles at the University of Rochester and Tanglin, my job has included management of projects and people. At Tanglin, I manage the creation and maintenance of our department website, the implementation of a shared google drive, university visits, and application workshops. At Rochester, I managed the I-20 workflow for 500 international students each year and digitized the entire process. I managed international virtual recruitment, and during the onset of the pandemic, I led the office-wide transition to digital recruitment through creating presentations, implementing new workshops, scheduling, and building the events into Slate. At Rochester, I hired, trained and managed several teams of student employees including 15 interviewers, 3-8 office assistants and 2-3 social media interns. I managed interview registration and allocation, did quality control checks on interview notes, and followed up on missing assignments. I increased the capacity of the program and thus increased access for international applicants to engage in a virtual interview. As a student supervisor, I learned to be explicit and

concise with my communication, to set and agree upon clear expectations, to balance human relations with efficiency, and to lead with empathy and curiosity. I identified students who might just be behind because of a busy week or those who needed support with their workload. I work best when I am trusted to do my job, given freedom to suggest ideas, and appreciated for the work I do. Through organization and delegation, I hope to continue fostering collaboration and engagement and make everyone feel like a contributing and valued member of the IAS committee.

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?

In reviewing the DEI Organization Assessment Report, there were several findings that stood out to me. Comparing the strengths identified in the report (shared understanding of DEI as essential, welcoming and inclusive organization, and high member satisfaction) with McKinsey's 7-S Model of Organization Effectiveness, shows that our members do have shared values and vision around the purpose of International ACAC. Thus, as the board tries to drive organizational change it is essential to remain centered around our mission and shared vision as a way to unite members and direct future growth. I found several findings reflect issues prevalent in American DEI conversations including the minimization of cultural differences on the intercultural development continuum and the lack of diversity (racial and regional) in organizational leadership. This demonstrates that while we may have well-intentioned ideologies as an organization, these sentiments are not enough to produce systemic and organizational change. There is more work to be done at structural and individual levels in order to change systems that maintain the status quo. And lastly, I noticed that issues around the American centrism of the organization and recommendations for a regional engagement committee have not yet been acted upon by the organization. These aspects relate to the IAS committee and the work we do to bring access to a more diverse set of counselors and regions. The Board should continue to advance intercultural understanding and training for our community and consider ways to increase regional engagement in order to create opportunities for advancement and leadership from a wide range of members.