



# ANGIE COOKSY

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
*PRESIDENT-ELECT*

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

The work we do is all connected. Whether you work in a high school, or in a community-based organization. Whether you work at a college or university or are a partner in the higher education space. What unites us are the people, who work each and every day with commitments to access, equity, and education for each other and the next generation of students we serve.

To me, unity is to giving space to the innovative ideas, the hard conversations, the small disagreements, and the big and small wins. It's creating avenues to celebrate together and building bridges to the next big things, while still recognizing the paths paved to get where we are today. We create unity by talking, working together, and learning from each other.

This a field where I so often hear about "this side" or "that side". There is space for all of us in this work. It's one of my favorite things about what we do. In a career that could be competitive, we see professionals advise students about a school that could be a better fit than their own. In a field that could stick to "how things have always been done", we see colleagues raise their hand and suggest a new way of thinking about an idea, or a project, or a new way to advocate..

This doesn't mean we will always all agree. And we shouldn't. While I stand firmly on the glass-half-full side of positivity, I also am realistic enough to know that growing together is hard. It takes work, it takes compromise, it takes change. IACAC continues to be a leader in innovation and an affiliate that others around the country look to as a guiding light. With the changes in our profession, how we do our work, and our national organization's structure, we are poised for more change. Unity gives our members and membership the opportunity to grow from a place of strength because we place value on the unique talents each one of us brings to the table.

## SHARE YOUR STORY:

My professional journey, while unique to me, is probably not that different from so many of you. I share that because this role and this position can be filled by you too. When I think about my professional journey it's laced with moments with members of this organization. It's coffee chats before a college fair, and grabbing ice cream when it wraps up. It's calls with colleagues asking to try something new or to bounce around an idea. It's watching new professionals ROCK at their new job. It's the support from those who have done this before passing the baton to the next person. Who I am as a professional has been impacted by so many of you, and you might not even realize it.

I started my career at Bradley University after graduating in 2007. The opportunities being at Bradley has provided me, combined with the experiences I have gained in IACAC through so many of our committees, have all played a pivotal role in shaping my professional story. For those I haven't yet had the opportunity to know personally, here is a little bit about my journey. I started as an on-campus admission counselor and then moved into a regional role in my second year. In the subsequent years my job title changed a few times wearing hats called, "Assistant Director", "Regional Director of Recruitment", "Chicago Director of Admissions", "Director of Admissions", to my current role as "Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Management", all while working from home. During this time I became a mom to two little boys, who are now rapidly approaching my eye-level, completed my masters and doctoral degrees, launched Elevate with an amazing partner (shout-out to Courtney Wallace), and developed a podcast for our profession called Elevating Admission Voices. . It's been quite a journey.

Celebrating the professionals in our field is my passion. On my podcast, I end each show asking those who listen to "pull up a chair, there is room at the table for everyone." I learn something every day from the work I get to do and after 15 years, that's something I'm pretty excited about.

## QUICK FACTS

### Pronouns

she | her | hers

### IACAC Member

14 Years

### Organization

Bradley University  
Assistant Vice President for  
Enrollment Management

## EDUCATION

BS- Bradley University  
Master's in Higher Ed- Bay Path  
University  
Doctor of Education in Higher Ed  
Leadership and Org Studies- Bay Path  
University

## IACAC ACTIVITIES

### Committee Activities:

- IACAC NACAC Delegate 2018-2022
- Middle Management Co-Chair 2015-2018
- Summer Institute Co-Chair 2013-2015
- Conference Attendee 2009-2010, 2014-2022
- Elevate CoFounder/Leader 2020-Present
- Committee member of: First Timers, Registration, Raffle, Admission Practices Committee, College Awareness and Preparation, and Equity and Access Adhoc

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Chicago Area Regional  
Representatives (CARR)- Member  
2009-Current



# CHRISTIAN BROWN

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
*TREASURER-ELECT*

## QUICK FACTS

### Pronouns

she | her | hers

### IACAC Member

8 Years

### Organization

Beacon Academy  
Associate Director of College  
Counseling

## EDUCATION

BS- The University of Tennessee at  
Chattanooga  
Master of Public Administration  
(MPA)- The University of Tennessee  
at Chattanooga

## IACAC ACTIVITIES

- Executive Board Council  
Team Director (current)
- College Awareness and  
Preparation (CAP) Co-Chair  
(2019-2021)
- Conference Planning  
Committee:
  - First Timers (current)
  - Branding (2018-2019)
- New Counselor Institute  
member (2019-2022)
- Mentorship member- mentor  
(2018-2019)

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Association of College Counselors  
in Independent Schools (ACCIS)-  
member  
NACAC Emerging Leaders-  
Program Co-Director

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

I envision the concept of unity taking shape through preliminary actions that promote a "reset". More specifically, I see the unification process as a time to reflect on our strengths, identify our weaknesses, and address our oversights as an organization. IACAC holds a long history of producing impactful work, and unity among its members is an essential component to strengthening this impact. Our organization is fortunate to boast a high volume of individuals who possess talents of great depth. However, this organization is also full of lesser known individuals who possess untapped talent and have a desire to serve.

As I consider the theme of "Unity", I am reminded of the importance of taking action. Like many of us, IACAC came out of the pandemic with new identities, refined purpose, and the responsibility to serve more effectively. As IACAC prepares for a future more independent of NACAC, emerging members become more pertinent to the organization's success than ever before. We must focus on recruiting new members and developing those ready to emerge as leaders for the purpose of creating a more unified body.

## SHARE YOUR STORY:

As a first-generation college graduate, I frequently navigated barriers that this status often exacerbated during my time in college. Although the path to earning my degrees presented challenges, those experiences are what fuel my work as a college counselor today. I stumbled upon the world of college counseling after being offered the opportunity to work as an admissions ambassador during my junior year of college. After completing undergrad, I accepted a job as an admissions counselor for my alma mater, a job I primarily took to help cover costs associated with graduate school studies. Unbeknownst to me, it is in this role that I would discover my passion of advocating for access to higher education for all who desire it.

Prior to transitioning to the high school side, I spent a decade working in college admissions where I supported students with realizing their post-secondary goals. I credit the effectiveness of my work to the individuals (many of whom are members of this organization) who taught me the importance of investing in myself as a professional, and to seek out opportunities to help those newer in this profession similarly invest in themselves.

The largest portion of my identities include being a proud, black woman who regularly reflects on the privilege I carry just existing in spaces that black educators before me could have only dreamed of knowing. I approach this work with seriousness and extreme care. My contributions in these spaces are direct action towards promoting environments where those with similar identities to my own are welcomed and empowered as they aim to articulate their professional identities and achieve growth within this field.



# APRIL LYNCH

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
TREASURER-ELECT

## QUICK FACTS

### Pronouns

she | her | hers

### IACAC Member

20 Years

### Organization

Syracuse University

Associate Director of Admissions

## EDUCATION

BA- Illinois Wesleyan  
University

MA- Western Michigan  
University

## IACAC ACTIVITIES

### Committee Activities:

- District Seminar Co-Chair
- Conference Financial Liaison
- Past Membership Co-Chair
- Committee member of:  
Mentorship, Middle Management  
Institute, New Counselor Institute,  
Ad-Hoc Membership Committee.  
Conference Committee  
Memberships: Evaluations and  
Tellers, First Timers, Co-Chair  
Raffle, Registration, & Hospitality

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Chicago Area Regional Representatives (CARR):

- President Elect (2022)
- Member Development Co-Chair  
(2018-2022)

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

I believe what will help unify our profession is more opportunity to listen to one another. We are good at supporting one another if we know what needs to be done. But I think we don't always realize new needs as they are emerging. I would love to see idea sessions added on to any event IACAC hosts. This could be just a few minutes where all attendees are invited to share thoughts, ideas, or concerns. The new ideas can be passed to committee chairs to help make sure future activities are focused on what our membership sees as important.

## SHARE YOUR STORY:

My very first job, I didn't work in an admission office that knew much about IACAC nor the professional development, opportunities, and friendships that were possible through it. Thankfully, friends connected me to IACAC. I found a community that I was able to reach out for help when I had questions. IACAC became the place that provided opportunities to learn about topics I didn't know were important to my career. It was a place I could help others. I want to make sure that I give that same back. I want to be that person who is always willing to answer a question, listen to someone who needs to vent, and helps lift those up who are coming next. This was my IACAC experience, and I am forever thankful for those who saw me and believed in me.



# SCOTT CARLSON

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
SECRETARY-ELECT

## QUICK FACTS

### Pronouns

he | him | his

### IACAC Member

5.5 Years

### Organization

Elon University  
Regional Assistant Director  
of Admissions

## EDUCATION

Bachelor's- University  
of Iowa

## IACAC ACTIVITIES

- Chicago National College Fair Committee Co-Chair (2019- Present)
- Conference Onsite Committee Co-Chair (2021-2022)

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Chicago Area Regional Representatives (CARR):

- Membership Chair (2020-2022)
- Case Study Co-Chair (2023)
- Member

Indiana ACAC Member (Current)

TCRAR (Current)

Former RACC and WACAC member

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

I feel there is a divide between the more senior members in IACAC and the new counselors who are just entering the admission field. The new counselors are not sure how to navigate this industry or where to even begin. I feel this is why they often leave after only a couple of years because they don't see the path for longevity in admissions. To help change this I think we should have a mini fair with all of the Committee Chairs in IACAC at tables during IACAC Conference and allow the new counselors to walk around and get "encouraged" to sign up as a committee member. We could do this fair during the new counselor luncheon at IACAC Conference or even make it its own event during the Conference. This will begin to unite the new counselors with IACAC and allow them to learn from our senior members and become more comfortable in this industry and being around the senior members. Additionally, it makes the new counselors start to network outside of their university and become more involved with IACAC early on. This would allow the new counselors to see a path for leadership in this industry and hopefully a long career in Higher Education.

## SHARE YOUR STORY:

I began in this industry back in 2014 when I graduated from the University of Iowa. I became their first ever California Regional Representative. After a successful recruitment cycle, they made the position permanent and I started to expand my territory to cover more of the West Coast. I still didn't know if I wanted to make this my career though. After 3 years in California working for the University of Iowa, I wanted to make a change and move back to Chicago. Unfortunately, the University of Iowa had 2 Rockstar regionals in Chicago, so I decided to try corporate recruiting. After only a few months I knew this was not the right industry for me and made the leap back into higher education by becoming the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's Chicago Regional Representative. I knew that admissions was the right place for me so I wasted no time and started to get more involved with leadership roles in committees with IACAC and serving on the executive board in CARR. As I became more involved, I knew that I was ready for a new challenge, so I started to apply for new positions and I am happy to say that I am the first ever Midwest Regional Assistant Director of Admissions for Elon University. Elon is very different from my previous experience of working for only Large, Big10, Public Institutions. I don't think I would be at this point without IACAC. IACAC has been a tremendous resource and support for me during my journey and why I am so happy in this career right now. I want to become the Secretary Elect, so I can learn more about IACAC, be apart of the conversation on the executive board, and help make positive changes in IACAC and nationally.





# BETTIE MATTISON-FARRIS

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
*SECRETARY-ELECT*

## QUICK FACTS

### Pronouns

they | them | theirs

### IACAC Member

4 Years

### Organization

North Central College  
Assistant Director of Admission

## EDUCATION

BA- Marquette  
University  
MS. Ed- Northern  
Illinois University

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

The theme of "Unity" means a lot to me. It feels like a sense of belonging and collaboration and I think that it involves having multiple perspectives in conversation. In my time in IACAC I can tell that leadership is eager to foster more environments where we work together. So I'd like to see that move forward. There are a lot of younger people in our profession who have great ideas for IACAC and its members. Unifying our profession means that those voices should be elevated and connected to help build a strong foundation for future leadership. I'm hoping to be a vessel to share ideas and use this space to bring important issues to the forefront. My vision is to build connections between where we've been and where we are going, so that we can continue to create meaningful opportunities and share resources within our field. Hopefully working with New Counselor Institute, I can usher in a new cohort of admissions professionals and help them get connected with the right people as sources of support and mentorship.

## IACAC ACTIVITIES

- New Counselor Institute Co-Chair (2022-Present)
- Equity and Access Ad Hoc Committee (2022-Present)
- Inclusion, Access, and Success Committee (2022-Present)
- Co-Presented at 2022 Conference
- Sharing the Dream Conference Attendee (2021-2022)
- North West District Seminar Attendee (2022)
- LGBTQ+ SIG

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

MACAC Member (Minnesota  
ACAC)- 2019-2020

## SHARE YOUR STORY:

I am a first-generation college graduate. I've changed my mind, changed paths, taken new risks, and learned so much from these experiences. I started working through undergrad in nonprofits, which taught me how to be resourceful and think creatively. It also showed me who is often marginalized within our institutions. After graduating with my master's degree, I entered the admissions field working from the lens of advocacy. I continue to focus on access and belonging for students. I know that I'm here because of people who encouraged me to continue: mentors, professors, colleagues, supervisors, and friends. Being first generation, I understand how important community is. And they have been a backbone for helping me reach my goals. I am proud of my identities as an LGBTQ professional, a Black woman, and being from a low-income background. So being visible and transparent is something that I take seriously. I know how valuable it was for me to see myself in positions I aspire to, and if I can inspire one person to take a chance on themselves then I'm happy with that.

We work with students who share similar stories as mine, and I know there are many people in IACAC who offer so much support. I think that the work we do matters a lot. Students should make choices that are the best fit for who they are and who they aspire to be. So I'm happy that working in admissions is a way for me to help them make those connections.



# ASHLEY BROWN

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
*BOARD DIRECTOR*

## QUICK FACTS

### Pronouns

she | her | hers

### IACAC Member

13Years

### Organization

University of Vermont  
Regional Associate Director

## EDUCATION

BA in Communications-  
Fontbonne University  
MA in Management &  
Organizational  
Leadership-  
Webster University

## IACAC ACTIVITIES

- Project Reach Co-Chair (2018)
- Middle Management Institute  
Member/ Co-Chair (2019-2022)

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

Unity can be defined as: the state of being united or joined as a whole. Now more than ever, I feel it is vital for all parts of our profession to be joined together to not only continue to deliver the highest level of service to our internal and external stakeholders, but to also reach the highest heights that IACAC as an organization, is capable of reaching.

When I think about unity within IACAC, I think of "both sides of the desk" uniting and partnering at the highest level to serve students and families. I think about uniting younger and more experienced professionals for mentorship, guidance and learning opportunities. I think of the things that make all of us unique within our member body (our ethnic backgrounds, personal identities, etc.) and using those differences to unite and strengthen us in all corners of our organization. As a truly unified organization, I feel we can we can continue to be a shining example of what an ACAC organization should be, and be more powerful than ever before.

## SHARE YOUR STORY:

I started in college admissions 13 years ago at Webster University, a small private liberal arts university in St. Louis, MO. Upon my graduation from college, I was unsure of what my professional career path would be and was encouraged to apply for a freshman admissions counselor role upon graduating. I was hired 2 weeks after I graduated, and the rest is history! After my time at Webster, I had the pleasure of working as a regionally based recruiter for the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, a Big 10, research 1 institution. In this role, I recruited first - time freshman students from the Midwest region, and also served as a regional recruitment manager, leading and managing employees stationed throughout the Midwest. In my current role, I serve as the Midwest Regional Associate Director for one of the most premiere institutions on the East Coast, the University of Vermont.

As a higher education professional, I feel that the work we do is truly a privilege, guiding students and families through one of the most important times in their lives. I am grateful to be part of this important work, and look forward to continuing to serve students, their families, my institution as well as IACAC at large.



# MEGHAN CHRUM

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
*BOARD DIRECTOR*

## QUICK FACTS

### Pronouns

she | her | hers

### IACAC Member

4 Years

### Organization

Illinois Student Assistance  
Commission (ISAC)  
Professional Development  
Specialist

## EDUCATION

BA- Psychology: Aurora University  
MS Ed.- Higher Ed & Student  
Affairs: Northern Illinois University

## IACAC ACTIVITIES

- Professional Connections
  - Co-Chair ('21- Present)
  - Member ('20-Present)
- Local Host Conference Co-Chair ('22-Present)
- Illinois College Fair (2020-Present)
- Scholarship Committee ('19-'21)
- Conference Presenter ('21-'23)
- James A. Alexander Newcomer Award (2021)

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Illinois School Counselor Association (ISCA)
  - Presenter ('21-'22)
  - Lead Coordinator of annual FAFSA Symposium
- Illinois Association for Student Financial Aid Admins (ILASFAA)
  - Presenter ('22-'23)
- Peoria Emerging Workforce Alliance (EWA) Committee ('21-Present)

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

My vision to unite our profession is understanding college admission and financial aid can work together to support college and career readiness for students. College admissions and financial aid offices sometimes work in silos. Yet I believe they should and can work together to provide direct support for students to become college and career ready. One way I do this, is my involvement in the Professional Connections committee of IACAC, and the Peoria Emerging Workforce Alliance (EWA) Committee. I have learned about the different challenges and supports students are navigating to enroll and persist in college and the workforce. The lessons I have learned from IACAC, I share with the EWA committee and vice versa. They are two different fields, but helping all students become college and career ready. Becoming college and career ready is different for each student, but I believe we have a responsibility to help all students, no matter their path. For me, I believe at the core of our profession is the innate need to help people. I believe we all have this feeling and helping people comes in many different forms. One way is by supporting each student to understand their available postsecondary options. Another way is letting the student know they are not alone during their journey. The world of college admission and financial aid are changing, and how we support students to become college and career ready is too.

## SHARE YOUR STORY:

I have always known I have wanted to help people. I didn't know how I would do that, but I knew that helping people was my goal in life. I found my way to help people when I became a tour guide at Aurora University. I loved talking to prospective and incoming students to tell them about AU and why it felt like home to me. When my time came to leave AU, I found another way to help people. I became an ISACorps member to help students and families learn about and navigate the financial aid process. As a first-generation student, I struggled to navigate the complex financial aid process. By being an ISACorps member, it provided me the opportunity to share what I wish I had known while going through the process. Now, as a member of the Professional Development team, I help even more people. I support and advise school counselors, college admission representatives, community-based organizations, and more across the state to understand the financial aid process. Understanding financial aid can be overwhelming, but I do my best to help anyone, and everyone knows that financial aid is accessible for all Illinois students and their families.



# CODY DAILEY

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
*BOARD DIRECTOR*

## QUICK FACTS

### Pronouns

he | him | his

### IACAC Member

5 Years

### Organization

Lyons Township High School  
College and Career Counselor

## EDUCATION

BA- International Relations:  
Knox College  
M.Ed.- School Counseling:  
DePaul University

## IACAC ACTIVITIES

- Media Communications Chair
- Scholarship Committee Member
- District Seminar Committee Member
- National College Fair Member

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- School Counseling Equity Fellow at San Diego State University
- LTHS Equity Ambassador

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

I believe we can all unite in wanting what is best for students and on a greater scale, the higher education landscape. The last few years have been challenging to say the least, but I believe we have grown to meet the needs of the challenges of tomorrow. I believe centering ourselves in what brought us to this field will help guide us in the future and connect us as one. In any sort of process, things work most effectively when all come together for a common goal and a common purposes, utilizing their best practices to accomplish the goal. I think we can do just that at IACAC.

## SHARE YOUR STORY:

I am a first generation college graduate who grew up in a rural community, in a low-income single-parent household. I don't know where I would be today if it weren't for opportunities that presented themselves to me. I feel grateful, having overcome so much. I am also an out gay man and feel passionate about my identity and building inclusive spaces. Those are not always afforded to all, so I constantly push for inclusion. I am passionate about a lot of communities including first generation, immigrants to the US, and LGBTQ+ youth. My dream is to build the space to revitalize the national LGBTQ+ college fair. I also have a well rounded work history. Prior to becoming a counselor, I worked in Workforce Development and Financial Aid. I've seen how many groups can find common ground and means to collaborate.





# ROBYN MORETH

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
*BOARD DIRECTOR*

## QUICK FACTS

### Pronouns

she | her | hers

### IACAC Member

10 Years

### Organization

Maine South High School  
Postsecondary Counselor

## EDUCATION

BA- Spanish: Indiana University,  
Bloomington

MA- School Counseling &  
Guidance: Lewis University

## IACAC ACTIVITIES

- IACAC Conference Presenter (3 Times)
- Co-Chair Professional Connections Committee
- Scholarship Committee
- Bus O'Fun and Plane O'Fun Participant

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

NACAC Member  
CACCA Member

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

My vision to unite our profession is grounded in the experiences I had as part of our district's SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity; [nationalseedproject.org](http://nationalseedproject.org)) cohort during the 2020-21 school year. Each monthly session focused on topics to explore (racism, privilege, intersectionality, microaggressions, oppression, LGBTQIA+ perspectives) by sharing our own experiences through stories and conversations with our colleagues to better understand and appreciate our connectedness. In doing so, we came to realize that social justice work is embedded into not only our personal lives, but also our professional lives. Indeed, one of the main purposes of SEED is to understand that this work is deeply personal, ongoing, and vital in order to create more inclusive classrooms, schools, and communities. This experience has built a critical foundation for me to incorporate this philosophy into action. SEED has helped reiterate what I have known since I became an educator - no two students are alike and there is no single story that defines all of us. Using what I have learned only fuels my desire to constantly be learning more in order to be a more effective counselor and to help unite the spaces where I have the good fortune to enter.

## SHARE YOUR STORY:

Professionally, I have worked in four different public high schools as a Spanish teacher, school counselor, EL counselor, and postsecondary counselor. Personally, I am the mother of two teenage sons. I approach my work from the lens of both counselor and parent. Therefore, being a student's champion is what is essential to me. To that degree, my current district's mission to "get it right for every student" embodies everything that I believe exceptional counseling to be. It is an incredible honor to serve as one of my students' most important and trusted mentors. Helping them realize their passion and mission and how they can apply that self-discovery to their postsecondary goals is what motivates me.

IACAC has taught me that building relationships with my colleagues on all sides of the desk, my students, and their families is paramount. I believe that the human connection is at the core of this amazing work. Our connectedness has never been more essential than it has been in these last few years. When we feel connected, we feel seen, heard, and therefore valued. I strive to uphold a caring and compassionate environment where all are welcome, celebrated, and inspired.



# REJEANND A ROBINSON

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
*BOARD DIRECTOR*

## QUICK FACTS

### Pronouns

she | her | hers

### IACAC Member

9 Years

### Organization

Northwestern University  
Senior Assistant  
Director of Admission

## EDUCATION

BA- University of Illinois Urbana  
Champaign  
MA- North Central College  
ABD- Concordia University

## IACAC ACTIVITIES

- IACAC Conference- Attendee, Presenter (3 sessions), and Registration Committee Volunteer
- National College Fair Committee- Co-Chair
- Camp College volunteer
- Professional Development Ad-Hoc Committee Chair
- SIG-Committee Chair
- Conference Committee Chair- Branding

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Chicago Area Regional Representative- Member, Membership Chair (2 months-left for current role/leaving CARR)  
NACAC attendee  
NARAC attendee

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

My vision for uniting our profession includes a simple word: grace. We are all very deep into our own worlds and only dabble in another when we have an "ask". No matter if you are on the 2-year, 4 year, independent or HS side, we all contribute to the profession. We should unite those ideas to better serve our students by giving each other the grace to learn, comprehend and grow. The grace to "not know" and the grace to ask questions. Uniting our profession means taking a step back from the "go" to hear from each other and our changing worlds. Not only hearing, but listening, listening to the questions and listening to the concerns that may not be in our line of vision.

The other side to that unified vision is the ability to be inclusive to the different lives within our profession. Through different gender expressions, races, cultures, interests, and political views towards education, we have a plethora of experiences to explore. Of course, we will never all agree on any one thing, besides the bacon at conference, but we can strive to create an open and safe space of conversation and expression.

In this profession we have this unique ability to reach the masses before they become the decision makers. We should take advantage of that position by being the example within our own organization and showing the grace that is needed.

## SHARE YOUR STORY:

My identity is my professional story. I am an African American, first-generation college student from a private high school who struggled with higher education. I knew I was going to college, but I didn't know what it meant. For example, I thought a college being "University of" meant it was better than a college ending in "state". While I know that doesn't mean anything today it did direct my path. My first week on campus at the University of Illinois, through tears and excitement, proved that I was right. Not because of the name but because of the doors it opened. I had conversations I thought I would never have with people who seemed to know a lot more about college than I did. In that nervous and overwhelming challenge of feeling like I didn't belong, I became a tour guide with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. You know, our blueprint.

Working for U of I, WIU, Maryland, U of South Carolina and now Northwestern, I have kept my first gen, black women identity at the forefront of my brain when walking into a high school. I go into every visit trying to make my students feel comfortable enough with me to ask the questions that I was too uncomfortable to ask at 17. I didn't have every answer but what I did have and still have today is the "wanting". The wanting to help fill in the gaps, the wanting to ease a parents or students anxiousness and the wanting to make college seem obtainable for those who want it.

Being in IACAC, CARR and getting my doctorate has been the catalyst of knowing I can elicit change in this profession by being me, the African American, first generation college student who no longer struggles with higher education.



# MAIRA RODRIGUEZ

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
BOARD DIRECTOR

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

Within the past year, I have noticed more and more that people leave our profession within their first two years. It's no longer the phrase "you're in it for three years or life." Burnout is a real thing, and I would love to unite as an association to talk more about this. How do we retain talent? How do we empower new professionals to take on leadership roles and stay in our profession? How do we prevent burnout? Not easy questions to answer, but through conversations with one another we can unite our profession and encourage folks to remember their "why." Why did we choose this profession? Let's remind people that the work we do daily is not easy, but it's rewarding. We live in a world with lots of ugly, but also lots of good. My vision to unite our profession is by being honest about not only the tough things like turnover, insufficient pay, excessive travel, new policies, etc. but also celebrating the great things like the relationships that we build, a student moving to campus, a student graduating, etc. It's important that we engage and interact with intention because at the end of the day we all have the same goal. We want to help students be their best version as they begin the next chapter of their lives, but we can't do that unless we take care of ourselves first. Let's use our voices and empower one another to unite as a profession because our work matters.

## QUICK FACTS

### Pronouns

she | her | ella

### IACAC Member

6 Years

### Organization

St. Norbert College

Associate Director of Admissions

## EDUCATION

BA- St. Norbert College

Master of Education- Marquette

University

## IACAC ACTIVITIES

- New Counselor Institute Co-Chair (2020-2023)
- IACAC Conference Attendee (2017, 2018, 2022, 2023)
- Project Reach Conference Committee (2019-2020)
- Scholarship Committee ('19-'20)
- Mentorship Mentee (2020-2021)
- Middle Management Institute Attendee (2021)
- LatinX SIG (2020-2021)

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Chicago Area Regional Representatives (CARR) Member- (2019-Present)
- NACAC Member (2018-2022)
- College Board's Enrollment Leadership Academy Graduate (21)
- NACAC Conference Attendee (19)
- NACAC's Guiding the Way to Inclusion Conference Attendee (2018) & Presenter (2022)
- MIDWest Conference Presenter (2021)

## SHARE YOUR STORY:

I completed my Master of Education in Educational Policy and Leadership from Marquette University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and Spanish from St. Norbert College. Through my academic experiences, I found my voice and quickly learned the importance of community. Being the first in my family to receive a bachelor's and master's degree was a big deal not only for me but also for my family. My family has always been my motivation and I can't tell you how many times my parents told me that "I was going to college." They instilled in me the importance of receiving an education at a young age. This is why I love talking to students and families about the importance of pursuing higher education if it's what they want. I didn't think I would end up in the admissions field when I first started seven years ago, but it has become my vocation and one that I love. Providing access to higher education is my passion. I am aware that the college search process is a marathon and not a sprint. I strive to empower students with this philosophy because of how daunting of a process applying to college is based on my own experience and admissions background. Being rooted in Norbertine and Jesuit values through both my education and work has taught me the importance of developing the whole person; therefore, as an admission counselor, I am committed to ensuring students' interests, ambitions, and goals are at the center of the search process - not mine or their loved ones. I believe that you must meet students where they are at and encourage them to integrate all aspects of their lives in the college search process. Overall, I have a passion for serving students and continue to be an advocate with and for others in my daily work.





# KRISTIN SMIGIELSKI

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
*BOARD DIRECTOR*

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

### QUICK FACTS

#### Pronouns

she | her | hers

#### IACAC Member

17 Years

#### Organization

Parkland College

Dean of Enrollment Management

### EDUCATION

Bachelors in Communications-

DePauw University

Masters in Higher Ed- University of  
Illinois, Urbana- Champaign

### IACAC ACTIVITIES

- Transfer Advisory Committee:  
Co-Chair (2019-2022)
- Recipient of the Molly K. Arnold  
Award- 2021
- Elevate Participant (2022-2023)
- Conference presenter & panelist

### OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- IACRAO:
  - East Central District Chair  
(2011-2012)
  - President (2017-2018)
  - Member (2011-Present)
- AACRAO:
  - State and Regional  
Committee Member (2021-  
Present)
  - Nominations and Elections  
Committee Alternate (2022-  
2023)
- Illinois Council of Community  
College Administrators (ICCCA):
  - Conference Attendee and  
Presenter

I believe that our profession needs to unite to best serve our students. Our goal in working together should be to reduce barriers that students face in the admissions and enrollment process. We can do this by collaborating with one another to help students connect the dots and not leaving it up to them to navigate the process alone. We need to work as a united front, understanding that our own institution may not be the best place for a particular student, but help connect them with ones that are. We should be comfortable with idea-sharing and benchmarking. I find great value in learning what colleagues are doing at their institutions and altering to make it our own. Our students are exposed to a society where we struggle to find unity on several topics. By bringing a sense of unity to our profession, we will show students that it's a safe space and simply put, we are here to help. We should lead by example and students seeing that in action will have a great impact on how they work and collaborate now and in the future. We have a great responsibility to expose and prepare our youth for post-secondary options so it's time to rise to the occasion.

### SHARE YOUR STORY:

I have been in Higher Education since 2005. Really, it's probably a story like many of your own. I had just moved back from Poland and was looking for a job--any job! This is back when jobs were posted in the newspaper, and you'd go through the Help Wanted ads. I saw a posting for an Admissions Counselor at U of I and my first thought was 1) I didn't know that was a thing and 2) I think that could be a cool job. I spent 13 years at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and over the course of that time, I was fortunate to take on a variety of roles to figure out my passion. The most recent years I spent there was working with transfer students and that's where my passion remains. I used that as motivation to move into my current position as the Dean of Enrollment Management at Parkland College. I have been in my current role for almost 5 years, and I can honestly say that I learn something new every day. I think that's the important thing about this career; never stop learning and be humbled by the fact that you have room to still learn. I love seeing the power of education and how it can truly change someone's life. I see this on a regular basis in my current position. Transferring can be a tough process to navigate, but by being on this side of the fence, I am able to help facilitate processes and agreements that reduce barriers for students.





# JENNIFER SPARROW

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
BOARD DIRECTOR

WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY"  
MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

## QUICK FACTS

### Pronouns

she | her | hers

### IACAC Member

35+ Years

### Organization

JSS College Counseling  
Independent College Counselor

## EDUCATION

Masters of Education, Student  
Personnel Services- University of  
South Carolina

## IACAC ACTIVITIES

- Regular Conference Attendee
- Conference Session Moderator-
  - 2 times
- Conference Panel Member
- Conference Teller

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Waukegan to College (CBO)  
Board Member and Volunteer (5+  
years):
  - reviewed and updated  
program
  - advised and supported  
students through application
- Strong Interest Inventory-  
Certified
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator-  
Certification In-Process
- Independent Educational  
Consultants FB group  
administrator, Tenderfoot IECs  
FB group moderator
- IECA- Associate member
- NACAC- Voting member

With all the changes over the past few years and continuing to happen regionally, nationally and globally, we do indeed need to unify: to reevaluate IACAC goals; question our assumptions; and to keep our collective students at the center of everything we do as a professional community. High school counselors, college representatives, CBOs and IECs make up that professional community.

IECs: we're like most professions. We have, in the greater Chicago area, fabulous, experience-diverse and professional members of either HECA, IECA, IACAC and/or NACAC. There are IECs located outside of the Chicago-area who should be encouraged to join as well. As a profession, IECs are not only staying but growing. I would activity encourage IECs to pull up an IACAC chair and unite in our shared goals and concerns.

Based on an experience I had at DePaul University, I'd love to see more IACAC colleagues sharing a round table. To resolve conflicts between advising staffs, we formed a monthly "counseling committee." Literally, it was a round table, with every university department or office invited. For 3+ years, we solved problems, created new systems, and developed strong professional relationships. Whenever I'm visiting with a colleague or getting to know someone new, I feel I'm back at the same round table, with people committed to doing the best for our students. And at the heart of our profession is for each of us to understand, appreciate, and support each other.

## SHARE YOUR STORY:

I am forever grateful for the range of professional positions which led to my "capstone" career, being an IEC. My combined decades as a resident life advisor, undecided major advisor, University 101 presenter (SII and "alcohol educator"), accreditation staff assistant, academic advisor, liaison to CP&P/admissions, scholarship coordinator, admission representative, regional director of admission, and admissions reader all played a part in how I assist students and their parents through the admission process. From these viewpoints, I learned that there is no one best way to assist students. There are differing ways and the students use that which works best for them.

Think back on your education for that one class that made a difference in your professional life. The critical class for me was the "Planning, Implementation and Dissemination of Change" as these 3 stages can be applied to everything, planned or unexpected. For example, as scholarship coordinator, I succeeded in getting a 2-digit code added to the university-wide system which followed students' scholarship status from prospect through graduation. As a change agent, other impacts were small, others significant but each one positively impacted students and the college community.

My experience with IACAC has altered over the years, from newcomer to experienced regional director of admissions, from getting lost when visiting high schools to knowing what a full day really means for high school counselors. My participation at conferences changed from just attending sessions to assisting with "behind the scenes" tasks while attending sessions and enjoying all the activities. If elected as a Board Director, please know that I consider change an essential part of my responsibilities and will apply my almost 40 years of experience to ensure that all changes benefit students and the members of IACAC.



# LATISHA WILLIAMS

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
*BOARD DIRECTOR*

## QUICK FACTS

### Pronouns

she | her | hers

### IACAC Member

8 Years

### Organization

Harold Washington College  
Assistant Dean Of Early College &  
Matriculation

## EDUCATION

BS- Advertising: Southern Illinois  
University- Carbondale  
MA- Higher Ed: Purdue Global

## IACAC ACTIVITIES

- IACAC Conference Entertainment Committee (2021-Present)
- First Cohort Member of LEAD (Leadership, Equity, Accountability, and Diversity) program for Professional Development in Higher Ed

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Illinois Education and Career Success Network Conference Presenter on Dual Credit/ Dual Enrollment (2023)

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

My vision to unite our Higher Education profession is to make sure community colleges have a voice as we build our relationships within organizations such as IACAC. At City Colleges, our students are hungry for success and continued education at four-year institutions. I want to use my voice and resources to make sure universities don't forget about students who attend city colleges. In order to do that we have to focus on coming together, it's more than just recruitment. Its exposure, it's getting away from your comfort zone and learning about a different type of institution and student demographic. Its starts with us. We are the future leaders in Higher Education who will unite and share resources.

## SHARE YOUR STORY:

As an African- American counselor and now Dean at City Colleges, I am focused on access and making sure my students have a seat at the table. I am a first-generation college student. My parents did not have a college savings fund for me. As a senior in high school, I educated myself. I filled out my FAFSA on my own because I understood that I needed this to be done in order for me to get to college. My higher education background has focused on students of color and first gen students who come from underserved communities and high schools because I was that student. I have been through that process and know the limitations that arise when minority students attempt to go to college. My background has connected me with great higher educational leaders and counselors. I want to use those connections to better serve my students and it starts with my students at City Colleges.



# LISA WINKER

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
BOARD DIRECTOR

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

The Conference theme of "Unity" is a timely topic in today's world. We are witnessing increased polarization, division, and fragmentation in many areas of society. Uniting within our profession is complex and multi-faceted, but it starts with recognizing and embracing our diversity, strengths, and shared values. Our organization must continue to recognize and value the diversity of our professional community, including different races, genders, ages, cultures, and perspectives by creating safe and supportive spaces for people to express their ideas, opinions, and experiences without fear of discrimination, harassment, or exclusion.

We must provide equal opportunities and resources for people from underrepresented groups, such as women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ individuals. We must continue creating mentorships and other networking programs that connect people across different regions, backgrounds and experiences to share knowledge, skills, and support.

We need to prioritize collaboration and teamwork over competition and individualism. This means breaking down tradition and fostering interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral collaborations. It also means recognizing and rewarding collective achievements, such as cross-committee projects, partnerships, and community engagement.

Ultimately, we need to focus on our shared purpose and values by identifying and prioritizing the key challenges and opportunities facing our profession & our students. Let's promote a culture of continuous learning, innovation, and adaptability, where people are encouraged to explore new ideas, take risks, and embrace change.

All in all, we need to embrace our diversity, promote inclusivity and equity, prioritize collaboration and teamwork. Let's focus on our shared purpose and values by utilizing a collective effort and commitment from all members of the profession, from the least experienced to the most senior. By working together, we can create a more united, resilient, and impactful profession that serves the needs of society and advances human knowledge and well-being.

## SHARE YOUR STORY:

I have been shaped by my upbringing as a middle child in the multicultural southern suburb of Park Forest, IL. My diverse career path has exposed me to various aspects of life, including working as an educator, a former business owner, a mother, and a professional educator who has landed in Admissions. These experiences have contributed to my passion for education and my recognition of the injustice that exists in the world today.

I grew up with a strong sense of community and a love of learning. After completing my degree, I spent twelve years as a math teacher before deciding to raise my family and run my mother's landscape business. Within those roles I learned important tools that I now use as a Regional Admissions Counselor. Throughout my career, I have had the privilege of working with a diverse range of students, including international students, those with learning disabilities and students in the LGBTQ+ community. As a personal witness to students with challenges, I understand the importance of creating safe and inclusive spaces for all.

Starting in higher education later in life has not been without its setbacks. I'm still learning how to juggle the work-life balance. I've experienced sexual harassment in the Regional workplace and understand firsthand the damaging effects of discrimination and harassment. I empathize with those who feel held back and not heard. I use my experiences to become an advocate for workplace equality and to help others who have faced similar challenges.

My identities and experiences have shaped me into the person I am today. I have a unique perspective and a deep understanding of the challenges that many students and employees face. I am committed to creating a more inclusive and equitable world, one where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

## QUICK FACTS

### Pronouns

she | her | hers

### IACAC Member

10 Years

### Organization

Indiana State University  
Chicago Regional Admission  
Counselor

## EDUCATION

BA Elementary Education/Teacher

Licensure- Eureka College

Math Teaching Licensure- Prairie State

Courses in Masters in Computer

Ed/Internet Studies- Aurora University

Courses in Masters in Computer Ed-

Governor's State University

## IACAC ACTIVITIES

### Committee Activities:

- Inclusion, Access, & Success
  - 2020 LGBTQ+ Presenter
- High School Counselor Professional Development
- Mentorship (mentee, mentor, Co-Chair)
- National College Fair
- Project Reach Ad-Hoc
- SIG Involvement: Women in Admissions, Learning Differences, LGBTQ

### Conference Committees:

- Raffle, Registration/Hospitality, Evaluations and First Timers.
- Presenter: 2019, 2021, 2022

### Awards:

- 2018 Mentorship Match
- 2021 Molly K. Arnold Award

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

CARR member

NACAC member

Licensed IL Teacher

Hosted Japanese College Student



# LAUREN YATES

POSITION RUNNING FOR:  
BOARD DIRECTOR

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE THEME, "UNITY" MEAN TO YOU IN THIS PROFESSION?

### QUICK FACTS

#### Pronouns

she | her | hers

#### IACAC Member

5 Years

#### Organization

Ottawa Township High School  
School Counselor

### EDUCATION

BA Music Education- Bradley  
University

MS Ed School Counseling-  
Quincy University

### IACAC ACTIVITIES

- Scholarship Committee
  - Member(2019)
  - Chair (2020- Present)
- High School Professional Development Committee (2019-Present)
- Mentorship Mentee (2019)
- Transfer Summit Attendee & Presenter (2020)
- District Conference
  - Attendee (2021)
- Webinar Moderator (2020)
- Conference
  - Attendee (2019, 2021)
  - Presenter (2021)

### OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Give Back (Alumni and Mentor)
- IVCC Transfer Night Moderator (2019-2022)
- College Changes Everything Conference Presenter (2020)

I believe that, more than ever, our profession needs to be unified in vision and movement. We are coming out of a global pandemic that forced changes to how we work and not only our lives but that of the students we serve. We have to adapt to new needs and push forward together to ensure we are as equitable and inclusive in all that we do. It is my hope that we can unite together and collaborate more within our committees not only to have the hard conversations but to see what work we can do together to innovate and adjust to the needs at hand. I would love to see more collaboration of how to reach more of the districts outside of Chicagoland, with conference itself and the high school counselor pre-conference, being a springboard to reach out to those counselors who feel they are "on an island". We don't know what we don't know- let's work together to harness our knowledge and experiences to help each other, help our students we work with, and help move IACAC forward.

### SHARE YOUR STORY:

I believe that everyone creates their own story and that your past informs your future. I am a first-gen college graduate. I went into college not understanding just how fortunate I was to get the scholarships I was awarded to make going to undergrad at Bradley affordable for my parents. I am fortunate to be a Give Back Scholar and that in being one the idea of giving back to my community and to others is important. I thought I would be a high school band director until I retired, but I learned that I enjoyed working with students through their problems and planning for their future more which sparked me to pursue becoming a school counselor. I worked as a Walmart Assistant Manager as I completed my Master's, and learned a lot about leading others and working as a team. I joined IACAC to connect with others in the profession to educate and connect myself to best serve my students. These experiences in my life are just some of what help guide my professional outlook and how I work with my students. Just as I have my story, every student has their own story and their own path- it is my goal to help guide them to the resources to help them plan their future and be as knowledgeable as I can to be a resource myself for them. One of my passions is for students and families to know more about the transfer process while in high school. In my community, there is a high percentage of students that pursue community college, and the connection between the community college and high school is something I value. Thanks to IACAC, I have been able to connect to resources to strengthen that connection and grow it for the betterment of my students.