



2021 Executive Board Election Candidate

Delegate to the NACAC Assembly Application

Name: Sonia Soni

Title: Head - Career Guidance Counselor & Psychology Faculty - International Curriculum

Institution: Aditya Birla World Academy

Location/Region: India/South & Central Asia

Member Group: Secondary School

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.

As a strong advisor, advocator and a passionate change-maker I have always worked towards discovering new things and exploring the diversity of our student population. Always assiduous, affable and compassionate by nature, my experiences collaborating with other counsellors from South East Asia and India as part of the advisory boards for College Board, University of Toronto and CIALFO has helped me not just develop my understanding of intra and intercultural perspectives but also the diversity of thoughts, socio-economic strata and resources of all stakeholders. This has moulded me to ameliorate flexibility of thoughts, understanding of passions, adaptation and accommodation to help stakeholders reach their potentials and to not look at college admissions as a social status but as the best fit.

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.

As an IB educator and a college counsellor I have been actively involved with the IB community as a member of the IBEN(International Baccalaureate educator network) for over 3 years. The

school service role that I carry out is of visiting schools across Asia and Australia for IB authorization and evaluation. These school visits have broadened my understanding and enhanced my knowledge of the best practices followed by schools internationally. These visits stimulated me not only to understand a school's counselling practices but it also encouraged me to focus on the holistic aspect the school is achieving and yearns for with the progress of time. Engaging and interacting with a diverse international community, exchanging of thought and knowledge has helped me build on my affective and reflective skills which are the foundation of a better understanding for the communities I am a part of. This role has honed my creative and critical thinking skills which has helped me to share specifics of counselling services with the school. Sharing such a perspective has indeed been a boon for institutes. I have also presented at the ACAC summer conference. This experience was not just about sharing my knowledge and research but it was an opportunity for collaboration, exchange of ideations and cultivating interpersonal skills – all of which has helped me evolve myself as a passionate and mindful professional.

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 a member of NACAC currently but will apply soon.

Delegate Specific Questions

Please list any relevant experience you have as a delegate, or in working with political assemblies. Also, if you have any relevant work with governance issues or with bylaws, be sure to mention those as well.

As a serving member of the various board of committees, I have been actively involved in advising and developing strategic planning for effective implementation of the committee's vision of supporting our community. One of the most rewarding experiences I have had as part of the IBEN (International Baccalaureate Educator Network) was when we were planning to publish a guide for all stakeholders to understand the university recognition landscape in India. I liaison with Mumbai University helping both parties understand and advised them on requirements regarding the policies about university recognition and also the documentation process to be followed by all stakeholders

Each Delegate is assigned to work alongside a Vice President. Which area(s) would be most interested in and why? Describe your work style.

My school that I am currently working for strongly believes in diversity and inclusion. Inclusivity is part of the fabric of the school. Not only do we include students who learn differently in the international curriculum section but we also have a separate school for those whose learning challenges require more support. As a counselor my role is to supervise and manage the college counselling for students belonging to both the sections. I am someone who is known to strongly advocate for diversity and inclusion in schools as it is an issue that is close to me. The area that I would be most interested to work alongside a Vice President would be in diversity and inclusion. Working closely on this issue will enable me to be more empowered with knowledge, information and resources that I can bring back to my community and at the same time I can

also be the voice of our community to the outside world. I am a curious learner who is always looking for new challenges. I work well both independently and in a team. A collaborator by heart and I love exchanging and ideating thoughts and sharing knowledge with a diverse range of other collaborators.

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?

Diversity and Inclusion are topics that need to be dealt with sensitively. The first task is to understand how we need to readapt our style of functioning and amend our systems and policies today for a better tomorrow. For many adopting and accepting change may not go down in a positive way and may be resistant to it but we will need to lead with conviction and an open mind to establish its benefits. Educating members by having open dialogues and sharing information will help them to be mindful, informed and equipped to bring a change in their communities. I believe International ACAC being an organization that has so many members across the world can easily reach out to many communities by engaging and sensitizing them on this issue. The board can use the expertise of varied representatives of different regions to understand the diversity of this common issue but based on different cultures.

Please provide a maximum 250 word statement of why you wish to run for the International ACAC Board, and other relevant information you would like members to know about you that you have not previously shared in this application.

I am interested being a member of the International ACAC Board as I believe that the opportunity will empower me to facilitate stakeholders not only to imbibe best college counselling practices but also help being the voice of the community from my geographical region to the board. Communication and affective skills being my strongest attributes will help establish an open and respectful relationship between stakeholders thus driving positive interactions through mutual understanding and respect. Being on the board of International ACAC will not only support my learning but also help me amalgamate different cultural values and global ethos to help build a better community. As a representative, it will enable me to help other communities deepen their knowledge and understanding of my region as I will have an opportunity to share our best practices being followed. Being part of a group of such diverse educators and counsellors who are collaborating, sharing and taking up new challenges will help me to be an informed collaborator in my community where I can support students and other counsellors.