



2024 Executive Board Election Candidate

President-Elect

Name: Liam McCartney

Title: Associate Director of International Admissions

Institution: Boston University

Location/Region: United States/Canada & U.S.

Member Group: Post-Secondary (College & University)

All Applicant Questions

Discuss your involvement with International ACAC, highlighting specific roles (with dates) and contributions made during your volunteer or leadership tenure.

Committee Experience:

In 2016, I joined the Government Relations Committee (now known as Advocacy & Outreach). During my term, the Regional Institute structure was formalized, and I assisted with the bursary process for the inaugural Latin America Regional Institute in 2018. I was selected as the Project Manager for the East Asia & the Pacific Regional Institute in 2020, which was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year, I will finish my first term on the Inclusion, Access, and Success (IAS) committee. For the 2023 and 2024 Scholars, I co-lead coordinating the placement of our scholars on the post-conference bus tours hosted by our members.

Executive Board Experience:

I was elected in 2021 as a Delegate to the NACAC Assembly, a role now known as Representative to the Executive Board. In this role, I have led the discussions

shifting the responsibilities of this role and creating an ad-hoc committee to study the structure of the Executive Board . I am currently sitting on this committee, which is scheduled to provide a report to the Executive Board later in 2024.

In 2023, I was appointed as interim Co-Vice President of Professional Development, sharing the leadership of this committee with Marsha Oshima . This year we have nearly doubled the number of webinars provided to our members and have worked with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Admissions Practices (AP) Committees to provide a new stream for the Pre-Conference Institute.

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.

On a daily basis, our students face difficulties accessing information about the array of higher education options that exist globally. It is incumbent on us, their advocates, to ensure that we are doing all we can to provide them with the most complete information.

I believe all students deserve a full understanding of the options they have to attend university wherever they wish – whether that be an institution in their own country or one across the world. Students deserve access to information about all their higher education options and not just information limited to the most well-known institutions in a handful of countries. I believe International ACAC can bring this information to students in a variety of ways. This includes both existing initiatives like the Scholars Program, Mentor Year Program, and Regional Institutes, and future programs that will emerge from the work of our committees.

Increasing the frequency of Regional Institutes would expand the program's impact on our students. The addition of more college fairs or student-facing workshops surrounding these institutes would increase the facetime that our members have with students and provide them with a greater understanding of the global options available. We should continue to invest in our Scholars, not only continuing to welcome these high-impact counselors to the annual conference, but also actively working with them afterward to develop robust local networks in their communities. I hope that as our membership continues to grow and diversify, we can develop new programming that benefits the most important constituents – our students.

Detail additional experiences that have equipped you with skills and insights applicable to the position you're applying for, emphasizing transferable accomplishments.

My experiences and leadership at Boston University have prepared me well for each of the three roles associated with this position. I have extensive experience overseeing complex processes, advising on best practices within our office, and advocating for change in a meaningful way.

In 2022, I was the co-lead on planning the Boston Area International Counselor Tour (BAICT). While this tour does not have the same size and scope as our annual conference, it shares complexities in planning. The work on this tour started nearly a year in advance and required working with all partner institutions to ensure that our attendees had a positive experience on each of our campuses and throughout their stay in Boston. This included forging collaboration between the participating universities, effectively communicating about the tour with interested counselors, and synchronizing the details of the tour's flow throughout the week. I know that the skills I gained through this process will undoubtedly help me in coordinating our 2025 Conference.

Outside of the BAICT tour planning, my decade of experience at Boston University has continuously reminded me of the importance of leaders to be vocal advocates on a daily basis. Within different departments at BU, I have consistently advocated to ensure that the policies we develop consider the unique intricacies of international applicants. This allows the staff on the international team to feel supported as we do our work to review applications and enroll a diverse, international student body.

As President of International ACAC, my goal is to harness all of these learned skills and ensure that our board can operate effectively on behalf of our members.

Outline your comprehension of the role you are applying for, specifying changes you'd like to implement while acknowledging current practices or programs you feel are effective.

It would be an honor to serve as the President-Elect, President, and Past President of International ACAC. These positions play a crucial role in the function of the

Executive Board, the leadership of the organization, and the impact felt by our members and students globally.

As President-Elect, I would continue to ensure that any member can be involved in the planning of our annual conference. Our conference welcomes members from around the world who represent different backgrounds, types of organizations, and levels of experience. We have work to do to ensure that our conference and other events are inclusive spaces for all. My personal experience is informed by many aspects, including my work at a private, selective university in the US and my identity as a white, cis-gender male. By including many diverse voices in our planning, we can ensure our conference feels welcoming for everyone and that our First Timers feel as included in their first conference as I did at mine.

The roles on the Presidential team include many opportunities for engagement by serving ex-officio on all our committees, representing International ACAC at other allied associations, and attending Regional Institutes. I believe we should invest resources into planning more opportunities for our members to come together around the world through our Regional Institutes or other programming. I believe that there are changes that can be made to the governing structure of our organization that will allow us to work for both the short- and long-term success of International ACAC. We are on the precipice of this change thanks to the efforts of the ad-hoc committee on Board Restructuring, and I am eager to continue this work as your President.

Describe your leadership philosophy and strategies for effectively managing and leading a volunteer committee, emphasizing communication, collaboration, and recognition.

I believe organizations work best when leaders embrace three central items: clear communication, autonomy in decision making, and intentional steps towards collegiality.

Communication is the backbone of any successful organization, and it is imperative for its leader to have a clear and open communication style. That doesn't have to mean sharing every detail, but it does mean providing all one can in a timely manner. When leaders share pertinent information with their team, it allows everyone to make informed decisions and do their work efficiently & effectively.

With my team at Boston University, I strive to be as open as I can and provide as much advance notice as possible.

Teams work best when there is an environment of trust and all members have clear roles & responsibilities. I believe the most effective leaders provide feedback and support, avoid micromanaging, and act as a guide. This guidance comes in many forms, including both constructive feedback and positive encouragement throughout the process, and prompt recognition once a project is complete. A quality leader also asks questions and makes sure that all perspectives are considered, particularly important for International ACAC, which represents nearly 4,000 global members.

Finally, it is important that a leader takes time to build relationships within their team. Setting aside time for team building & networking forms bonds between colleagues. Those bonds lead to greater trust, increased communication, and ultimately a stronger, more cohesive organization.

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.

The leadership of International ACAC can achieve two pillars – enhancing our member experience & clarifying the international brand – at once by expanding our impact with Regional Institutes and adapting our conference to ensure long-term success. Our annual conference remains one of the major ways that our members engage with one another and I am committed to ensuring that our conference in 2025 will allow for the networking and knowledge-gathering our members expect, while also listening to feedback of past conferences to encourage new or updated experiences.

Throughout the three-year term on the Presidential team, I believe we can use this feedback to inform how to enhance and improve future conferences. It is imperative we consider the changes we can make to ensure the long-term success of the conference to maintain its reputation as the professional highlight of the year for many of our members.

Our Regional Institutes will also continue to be an important way for members to connect, and I am excited that we are hosting four of these during the next year. I am interested in studying how to expand our regional institutes and/or increase their occurrence in the future, build up additional programming, and consider ideas that allow for more frequent gatherings, both virtually and in-person.

The final pillar – optimizing our internal operations – will be well underway following the conclusion of the work of the ad-hoc committee on board restructuring initiated earlier this year. This important work will allow us to become a more nimble and impactful organization in the future, and I am eager to continue to be part of this discussion and implementation in the next few years.

Share details about a notable contribution you have made in the field, underscoring its impact on the profession and industry. Highlight specific initiatives, programs, or leadership roles that showcase your commitment and expertise.

I am very proud of the work I have done as a member of the Executive Board and believe it has made an impact on our industry. As interim co-Vice President of Professional Development, our committee has doubled our webinar offerings on a variety of topics this year thanks to the hard work of those on our committee. The PD Committee has also announced a new stream for members during the Pre-Conference Institute by partnering with the Admissions Practices (AP) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committees to offer training on Ethics & DEI.

I spearheaded a motion passed last year that formed the ad-hoc committee for restructuring the Executive Board of International ACAC following the dissolution of the NACAC Assembly. While this dissolution had a very direct impact on the former NACAC Delegate Role on our board, it presented our organization with a rare opportunity to consider our governance and the structure of the entire Executive Board. This allows a space for us to ask what aspects of our current structure are working well, which ones are not, and how we can optimize the operations of the board to better serve our members.

This ad-hoc committee will deliver its report to the Executive Board by September of this year for consideration and implementation. I am confident that the work being done now will allow International ACAC to chart a course for the future that allows our organization to continue to thrive and flourish.

Share why you want to volunteer for a leadership role for International ACAC and why this particular position.

My involvement with International ACAC has been a crucial aspect of my career for over a decade, helping me to grow professionally. I have learned from many of our members and developed deep friendships & relationships with folks across the globe. It has been an honor to serve in many ways in the past, and I am excited at the opportunity to lead this organization through an important time as your President-Elect.

The strength of International ACAC lies with you, our members, and your dedication to students. I am interested in serving on the Presidential team to help shepherd ideas through our committee process so our membership can see this organization work for them. Direct input from members has led to some of our most successful & innovative initiatives, including Regional Institutes and the Mentor Year Program. As your President, I will strive to ensure that I center the perspectives of our members in all my duties & decisions.

Late 2024 will see a report from the ad-hoc committee on board restructuring. If elected to this position, I look forward to leading the organization through this important transition during my three-year term. I am excited about the opportunity to lead International ACAC through this process and ensure that the new Executive Board structure will provide our organization with the foundation we need for long-term success and stability. I hope that these changes will lead to increased representation on the Board and allow us to embrace the diversity of our membership - one of our most powerful attributes. This is an exciting time for International ACAC as our organization grows, diversifies, and continues to collaborate to benefit the students we serve every day.