

## **Position: Vice President for Membership**

**Michelle Chow-Liu**  
**High School Counselor**  
**Western Academy of Beijing**  
**China**  
**Member Type: Secondary School**

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## **Background & Experience**

### Previous professional or volunteer experience:

I have had the honor and privilege of serving as the VP for Membership since 2017 and am putting my name forward for a second term. The work of the membership committee is complicated and gratifying, and I seek a second term to build upon the knowledge I have gained to lead the team as our organization continues to grow and change. We have just begun a research project (for example, the for-profit universities outside the US) that I would love to see to completion. I want to continue to develop my committee to work on improving different aspects of membership work, such as policy language, deep dive into membership data that will help with the current strategic goals of the executive board. This past academic year, I have become the head of high school counseling, and I, therefore, have added to my current experience in leadership and in steering a team of the highly capable counseling department. I understand the importance of collaboration and continuing to develop best practices to move forward with my team. I shall bring this same energy and effort to my work to the executive board. I am also a highly organized and detailed oriented individual.

### International community engagement:

I have been a member of International ACAC (formally OACAC) since 2009. My first presentation was at the 2014 OACAC summer conference. Since being on the board, I have had the opportunity to present at many more conferences, namely at webinars (2018,2019), regional institutes (2019), summer conference (2019), NACAC (2019) with my colleagues and friends. I have also collaborated with other board members in writing a blog post on school profiles (2018). This past year, I was selected to be a scholar mentor and had the honor to work a counselor from Mongolia. I continue to stay active in our Regional network (Beijing International Schools' Counselor Network - BISCN) and work collaboratively with six other schools in organizing our annual Oct and March fairs. I understand that the work of our organization is primarily based on volunteerism. With such busy lives, my goal is always to have purposeful meetings and meaningful targets for the committee to stay active and engaged. Not having served on committees before putting my name forward for the VP for Membership back in 2017, was a very steep learning curve for me. However, I was able to do the work because I learned about all aspects of the organization. I felt that I was able to come in with critical 'new' eyes and reevaluate how the membership committee worked and try to implement efficient ways for the committee members.

- 1) My first task on the membership committee was to streamline the vetting of our individual and organizational membership applicants. This task primarily helped the vetting team (and myself) to review and approve (or deny) applicants in a much more timely manner. I created templates of emails that each member can use and had the senior vetting members train the new ones. Being mindful of our day jobs, I would assign members based on their "non-busy" timeframe. When we migrated over to a new platform in 2019, I also relearned the new system and redesigned the vetting processes to accommodate this change.
- 2) Back in 2017, our data subcommittee was still in its beginning stages. However, since then, I have recruited individuals who are keen on looking at data, and I would like to continue to work with them to further take a deep dive into our membership numbers and what they all mean.
- 3) The GEM awards had made progress. We have made changes to only offering this award biannually (previously four times a year with minimal nominations) and adjusted so that nominations are during our regional institutes. With this change, we are hoping to gain more traction with this that will elicit more nominations per award.
- 4) Engaging our membership: We plan to start a trend and culture of individuals in our organization to "share their stories," to further engage new members and existing members. We want to hear from those who are involved with International ACAC and encourage them to share their stories via our FB group. Working closely with my and other committee members, we plan to mobilize this initiative this year.
- 5) We have completed three revisions of our Membership's Policies and Procedures and will continue to reflect on the P&P, to ensure it reflects our organization well. Membership with International ACAC is a privilege, and having clear P&P will ensure that members are in line with the mission of our organization.

#### NACAC affiliation:

My participation with NACAC only began when I started with then International ACAC executive board in 2017. However, since then, I have attended the NACAC conference and had the privilege of presenting at this past year's (2019) NACAC conference. I have 'leveled up' in my professional work in that I have met great presenters at NACAC and have continued to learn about this field. I hope to engage more with NACAC during my time with the International ACAC executive board. One of our continued committee goals is to educate current International ACAC members on the importance of NACAC. We invite them to join the larger association - especially with the new membership model of NACAC, the more voices from International ACAC at the national level would help serve our organization better.

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## **VP for Membership Specific Questions**

Please describe any relevant work with databases and/or data analysis that you have encountered in your career. What types of databases have you used? What projects have you implemented?

I have worked with Naviance Family Connection as well as Powerschool. With Naviance, I was in charge of ensuring that payment is paid each year and creating surveys as well as collating reports on data (college acceptance and matriculation, test scores, etc.) for stakeholders. This

past year, we started with a new platform - MaiaLearning, and I have since need to learn a new system. I do this by attending training sessions when available through in person at conferences or via webinars. I am also trained in Powerschool and can create sections for our courses, as well as printing reports or transcripts if required. I am also aware that this particular position will mainly utilize Excel, and I am confident with my skills in navigating Excel. I have also created graphs and charts to showcase our membership numbers in a way that our membership would be able to understand. Volunteering as VP for Membership, I had to learn the Memberclicks platform twice. Once when I started and the second time when we upgraded the system. I can navigate confidently within this platform and have worked closely with our Assistant Director to run our membership data report, create ad hoc invoices, and assist our general membership with their inquiries.

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 want to develop a collaborative relationship with the VP for Admissions and Practices in the work we do when we audit our membership to ensure they comply with our P&P. This assignment can be as simple as ensuring our institutional and organization members have a primary member, though a simple task, it is quite time-consuming. Another collaborative work I would like to develop further is with the VP for Inclusion and Access. I want to continue is to build our data committee further and to dissect our membership types and to share this information with our executive board to help determine where we require membership. This information would also be helpful to recruit members and or see a correlation of membership growth in areas where we had our regional institutes. I feel that being strategic in how and where we recruit members, especially in the institutional members (secondary and postsecondary members), is vital to our organization. Along with this thought, the for-profit university research project would be something I wish to continue to lead and see to completion. Finally, I can see our committee working closely with the communications department to ensure the engagement of our memberships is strong. Developing the "share your story" concept and how to brand this would be the next steps of development.

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?

I have recently been promoted to the head of the high school counseling department this past academic year. I work with a team of 3 other counselors and an office assistant. It is important to me that I speak with one voice when I represent my team in public events. This role means I work collaboratively with the team and come to a consensus in debate and conversations. It is essential to be nimble in our thinking as this is the best way to discover best practices. My past role as the whole school counseling coordinator is to create our agenda and chair our meetings. Although I do not 'manage' the other counselors, I ensure that as a group (of 8), we come up with a common whole school counseling goal. I believe that as professionals, we must entrust others to do the work assigned, with that said, I do not believe in micromanaging. I like to play to everyone's strengths and ensure they are comfortable with the work that is delegated to

them. I am a listener and collaborator, and so that would be my management style. Having clear guidance helps me with my work, so collaboratively is how I prefer to be managed.

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?

Using data-driven information to make informed decisions of the direction of our organization is something I wish to build upon. The diversity training in the last two years has been a great start in having the conversation around diversity and inclusion. I want to help to develop this initiative within the executive board and discuss how we can take this to the next level. I believe having a continued conversation in maintaining this initiative is vital to implementing change - this will at least ensure we do not lose the momentum of our efforts in diversity and inclusion. The executive board should continue to survey our membership to find out from them what the next steps should be - having members' input will ensure that our organization is in this initiative together.