

Position: Vice President for Advocacy & Outreach

Patricia McKinney-Bergantino

Assistant Dean of Admission

Providence College

United States

Member Type: College/University

Background & Experience

Years of experience in college admissions counseling or related fields: 10+ years

Previous professional or volunteer experience:

As a professional, I have been involved with International ACAC and NAFSA Region XI. These organizations have provided me with incredible personal and professional growth. As the International Education Leader and International Enrollment Management Leader for NAFSA Region XI, I've been privileged to serve a community that is dedicated to higher education and international education opportunities. My interactions with a variety of local members have afforded opportunities for me to learn how I lead, how I communicate, and how to work with others whose opinions might be different from mine. As a participant and chair of a membership sub-committee for International ACAC, I continued to build my leadership skills as I managed our GEMS award and the new initiatives we accomplished as a committee. This took some work and effort, but the challenge was fun and exciting as we were able to celebrate the accomplishments of our membership each quarter. Throughout my professional career, I have gained invaluable skills that revolve around internationalizing a college campus. My knowledge and specialized experience, would allow me to be a favorable addition to the VP of Advocacy and Outreach role.

International community engagement:

Since 2014, I have served on the membership committee for International ACAC. In this role I have verified individuals appropriateness to participate in our organization. Additionally, I helped create and have chaired the GEM sub-committee. These opportunities have helped me gained invaluable skills that I use everyday in my current career. I served for two years as the NAFSA Region XI International Enrollment Management Rep (New England) and was chosen as the International Education Leader because of my diverse experience in International Education. In this role I advised new members, reviewed presentations, served as a voting member, coordinated activities, and planned regional conferences. I have served on many panels with NAFSA, Education USA and International ACAC.

NACAC affiliation:

I have been a member of NACAC since 2011. However due to my expertise being International, I have not been elected to attend the national conferences on behalf of our institution. However,

I did attend the NEACAC conferences (New England) and served on the Finance Committee. My role entailed helping our community college representative create a budget for needed support and then get those monies approved.

VP for Advocacy & Outreach Specific Questions

What advocacy issues do you see as relevant to International ACAC?

The need for increased international education funding for International Students. Costs continue to climb while most economies are stagnate. Immigration and VISA issues: the current administration (government) is trying to get rid of OPT and limit the H1B1 VISA in the United States. The need for higher education institutions to recognize higher learning curriculum such as A-Level and IB (outside of AP) so that this can reduce the overall cost of attendance for students.

Please describe 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.

One specific idea that I think it is important for this person to do is to advocate for members who are available to participate in Advocacy Days with NAFSA or NACAC in Washington, DC. Our international students need a voice in a place where it matters. If it is not possible to go to DC, can we get our members to request meetings locally in their cities and states?

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 am a flexible manager. Very similar to a rubber band. I go in when I need too and move out to give people room to learn and grow. I am currently the manager of International Admission at Providence College. I have also worked on the Membership committee and chaired the GEM committee. With NAFSA, I was the International Enrollment Management Rep.

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?

The very nature of our organization is including those who are different than ourselves and to advance their opportunities. I think we should continue to identify and groom newer counselors who want to grow in International ACAC. This can be done through mentoring and outreach. Encourage them to volunteer at the conference and find ways to get around barriers for attendance.