

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Ann Marie Strauss for President-Elect

Dear PCACAC members and leaders: As is said, timing is everything. I have enjoyed over a decade of membership in PCACAC and find the professional development opportunities and the collegiality of the membership inspiring. I am halfway through my twenty-first year as a school/college counselor and am in a professional and personal place to embrace the important leadership position of PCACAC President-Elect.

During my career in school/college counseling, I have worked in public and private settings, in well and under-resourced schools. I experienced the disparity of professional development opportunities among the schools in our region and am a staunch supporter of access for all counselors. I spent my first seven years as a school counselor in a high performing public school in Bucks County, Pennsylvania with ambitious students, a strong college going culture and supportive families. Surprisingly, even in this setting, counselors worked hard to convince the administration that release time to attend workshops/conferences was important and imperative—at times calling on my colleagues in the Pennsylvania ACAC to support my requests. When finally granted release time, there was no budget for PD and counselors paid our own membership and conference fees because we believed in the importance of professional development.

During the summer of 2007, my family relocated to Baltimore. I spent a year as a public high school counselor in an under-resourced school where none of the counselors belonged to PCACAC and didn't know that NACAC or its regional affiliates existed. I was excited when I received Jim Jump's email inviting PCACAC members to nominate colleagues for the Marion Flagg Scholarship, and even more thrilled when my colleague, a first-year counselor that I nominated, was selected.

Over the last twelve years, my membership in PCACAC has helped me grow both professionally and personally. I am an advocate for counselors engaging in PCACAC's mission. To that end, I will work to increase the membership and engagement of public school counselors, CBO counselors and independent educational consultants in PCACAC.

This is my tenth year as a member of the PCACAC CTFI committee, having served as the Chair for a three-year term. During my tenure as a NACAC Delegate I learned much about how NACAC operates, met many more inspiring colleagues than I can count and offered my voice on behalf of PCACAC. After serving as a Delegate, the Executive VP position on the Leadership Team was my next area of service. Two years into this current position, I have gained valuable leadership insight from my fellow Leadership Team members. As part of this team, I supported the renegotiation of two conference contracts (keeping the financial interests of the association at the forefront), supported the first PCACAC virtual conference and Summer Institute, engaged with Dr. Clyde Pickett for a Community Conversation helping the association create a path forward on our anti-racism journey and assisted in crafting PCACAC's first Value Statement.

I believe in life-long learning and the power of mentoring. I am at a place in my career where I am ready for continued professional/personal growth as the President-Elect of PCACAC and an opportunity to mentor those who aspire to leadership in the amazing field in which we choose to serve. I have a deep appreciation for the responsibility all PCACAC members share in supporting and guiding adolescents as they shape their future. I look forward to working with the association's membership and Leadership Team in fulfilling the mission and goals of the association as we continue to blaze new paths and create new opportunities. Timing is everything--I would be honored if the time is right for me to serve PCACAC as its next President-Elect.