

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Ann Marie Strauss for Secretary

I have enjoyed my time as a member of PCACAC and have found the professional development opportunities and the collegiality of the membership invigorating. In my seventh year as the Director of College Counseling at Garrison Forest School, I feel that I am in a place where I can make meaningful contributions to the association and enhance my leadership skills by working closely with the other dedicated leaders of PCACAC. During my nineteen-year career in school/college counseling, I have worked in public and private settings, in high performing schools and in under-resourced ones. I understand personally 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, I had to work hard to convince the administration that release time to attend professional development workshops/conferences was appropriate and important—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 I paid my own membership and conference fees because I believed in the importance of professional development.

The knowledge that I gained from colleagues in PACAC helped me grow as a professional and supported me in providing the best service I could to my students and families. During the summer of 2007, my family relocated to Baltimore. I spent one year as a public high school counselor in an under-resourced school where none of the counselors belonged to PCACAC and quite honestly, didn't know that NACAC or its regional affiliates existed. I was excited that year when I received Jim Jump's email inviting PCACAC members to nominate colleagues for the Marian 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. This is my eighth year as a member of the Current Trends and Future Issues committee and my third year as the Chair. I have served as a Delegate for the last three years during which I have learned so much about how NACAC as an organization operates, met many more inspiring colleagues than I can count and have offered by voice on behalf of our regional affiliate in important issues that shape our profession including the adoption of NACAC's new SPGP: Code of Ethics and Professional Practice. I would like to continue to be a voice for PCACAC. I believe in life-long learning, and hope to continue to grow, professionally and personally, as a member of the PCACAC Executive Team. I value teamwork and recognize the importance that each member plays in advancing the mission and goals of the association. I would like to serve PCACAC and believe that my experience can be an asset in this role. Thank you.