

Jeff Novak

University of Wisconsin

Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration and Director of University Housing

Qualifications: Please discuss the job positions, professional development activities, and other qualifications that prepare you for the board position for which you are applying.

My experience aligns closely with the duties of the Business Practices & Enhancement Director role. As Associate Vice Chancellor and Director of University Housing at UW–Madison, I lead a large auxiliary enterprise spanning housing, dining, conference services, facilities, and business operations, with revenues exceeding \$150 million. Key areas include Business Services, Dining and Culinary Services, University Apartments, Human Resources, Residence Life, Residence Halls Facilities, and Administration (marketing, assignments, and summer conferences). Across my career at UW–Madison and previously at the University of Central Florida, I have led work in capital planning, conference management, market analysis, vendor partnerships, P3 models, and technology systems that support housing operations and student engagement. These responsibilities require navigating complex institutional policies while upholding professional standards and strengthening external relationships. My long-standing engagement with ACUHO-I includes service as faculty for NHTI and RELI, which deepened my understanding of the Association’s structure, culture, and role in advancing best practices. Together, these experiences equip me to bring informed leadership, strategic insight, and practical expertise to the Executive Board in support of ACUHO-I members and the evolving needs of the profession.

Thought Leadership and Technical Credibility: Please describe what you would bring to the board in the realm of this competency.

I bring to the Board enterprise-level housing expertise and a commitment to continuous learning in a rapidly changing environment. My work requires staying attuned to trends in enrollment, affordability, workforce dynamics, capital financing, procurement, and risk management, all of which directly shape housing programs and ACUHO-I member priorities. I am fortunate to do this work and take pride in the campus housing profession and in ACUHO-I’s role in advancing professional standards, ethical partnerships, and data-informed decision-making. Through sustained involvement, I have developed a strong understanding of ACUHO-I’s organizational structure, volunteer culture, and core programs, and I value the Association’s impact on both individual careers and institutional practice. My strengths align with ACUHO-I strategic initiatives related to business practices, partnerships, and sustainability. I bring practical expertise in occupancy management, conference services, housing finance, crisis management, and dining operations, and I am committed to applying that expertise thoughtfully in a governance context to support ACUHO-I’s mission, members, and future direction.

Openness to a Multitude of Perspectives: Please describe what you would bring to the board in the realm of this competency.

Throughout my career, I have led complex, diverse organizations where success depends on valuing different perspectives and practicing collaborative problem-solving. I work to create environments where people feel respected, heard, and encouraged to contribute, because varied experiences and viewpoints consistently lead to stronger decisions and better outcomes. My leadership approach emphasizes active listening, asking clarifying questions, and a willingness to adjust as new information emerges. I have led through uncertainty, including during the pandemic, housing capacity constraints, and workforce challenges, where adaptability and shared decision making were essential. In those moments, keeping the broader mission ahead of individual preferences mattered most. As a Board member, I would help sustain a positive, productive culture among volunteer leaders, staff, and members, grounded in trust and shared purpose. I see governance as teamwork and value solving problems collectively while keeping ACUHO-I's mission and membership at the center of decisions. I bring humility, respect, and a commitment to acting in the best interests of the organization and the housing profession.

Strategic Thinking: Please describe what you would bring to the board in the realm of this competency.

I believe effective leadership is rooted in servant leadership and guided by strategic thinking that balances immediate operational demands with long term sustainability. In my current role, I work to stay attentive to trends in enrollment, demographics, affordability, workforce capacity, and capital investment to help position housing operations for sustained success. This approach involves anticipating change, thoughtfully evaluating risk, and aligning resources with the broader mission. I try to bring a systems-oriented mindset to strategy discussions, focusing on how the interconnected parts of housing programs, along with broader higher education trends, shape our work. I believe ACUHO-I can be most influential by continually assessing how its resources and services align with changing member expectations, while also protecting financial sustainability and long-term relevance. As a Board member, I would contribute a pragmatic and forward-looking perspective, recognizing constraints while encouraging thoughtful experimentation and adaptation. I value collaboration with staff and volunteer leaders to co-create solutions that reflect the diversity of ACUHO-I institutions and professionals. I am comfortable adjusting course as conditions evolve and believe agility is essential to ACUHO-I's continued impact.

Developing Others: Please describe what you would bring to the board in the realm of this competency.

I try to center developing others in my work, focusing on strong relationships, leading with intentional development, and feedback to help build capacity and sustain excellence. I view learning as continuous, strengthened through relationships, formal training, mentorship, and reflective practice. My involvement with ACUHO I institutes, including serving as NHTI and RELI faculty, has reinforced my commitment to supporting professionals at every career stage. Through



these experiences, I have come to appreciate the importance of creating environments where individuals feel supported, appropriately challenged, and connected to a broader professional community. On the Executive Board, I would emphasize leadership pipelines and volunteer development, recognizing that ACUHO I's strength depends on preparing future leaders for increasingly complex roles. I am committed to supporting opportunities that help members build skills, confidence, and professional networks, ensuring the Association continues to cultivate informed, capable leaders who will steward the housing profession forward.