

Kate Baier

New York University

Executive Director, Residential Life

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

There have been two constants in my professional life: New York University and ACUHO-I. Coincidentally, my meaningful ACUHO-I involvement began the same time as my tenure at NYU. I made my first donation to the Foundation while a participant at NHTI in 2003. That fall, I began my first position at NYU and, shortly after, I was appointed as the then GLBT Issues Representative on the ACUHO-I Executive Board. I have proudly served in various roles at NYU for the past 23 years, gaining experience managing budgets, negotiating contracts, developing staff, honing crisis response skills and creating environments where students flourish. During that same time, I have been honored to contribute to the Association during significant periods. As a member of the executive board, I served on the governance task force that drafted the framework which guided the transition from a representative board to the current knowledge-based governance structure. I was a member of the executive director transition committee, the group responsible for selecting our current CEO/Executive Director. I was elected to the board as the Residence Education Director in 2015 and was NHTI faculty (2018), a member of the NHTI coordinating committee (2017-2020) and chair of that committee (2020-2024).

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

My contribution to thought leadership and technical credibility is anchored in decades of experience at a complex global university and a deep, sustained commitment to ACUHO-I's strategic evolution. In this time of rapid change, it is difficult, sometimes exhausting, to keep up with the current status of local, national and international policies. I rely on reputable news sources as well as briefings shared from my campus's global services office, community and public affairs and the office of the president. I also look to the collective expertise in ACUHO-I and the knowledge shared through advocacy reports, straw polls, publications, conference presentations and initiatives such as the Future of the Profession. I have served as panelist for nine external reviews, applying my understanding of the university housing profession to individual campus contexts. I embedded the Future of the Profession reports in the Leadership Academy capstone project and guided inclusion of current information in the NHTI curriculum. On my home campus, I regularly plan and lead exercises to create alignment with university and divisional priorities and create opportunities to discuss current and relevant books or articles.

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

I understand that my perspective is inherently shaped largely by my own experience. My focus is on fostering an environment where individual differences are not just accommodated, but actively leveraged, ensuring that problem-solving is a function of collaborative, diverse thought. In practice this is achieved through a thoughtful and intentional leadership approach as well as creating formal structures that bring together different perspectives. As a leader, I work to create an environment where all members of the team feel valued, connected and heard. Formally, I convene a “council of advisors” whose role is to synthesize information and observe trends to formulate purposeful responses addressing concerns within the realms of inclusion, belonging, and equity for our student and staff community. I maintain awareness of employee experience by conducting exit discussions with outgoing staff to identify strengths in the department culture and opportunities for correction and refinement. Last year, as a department, we engaged in a year-long project to read and discuss the book *Identity-Conscious Supervision in Student Affairs* and reflect on our roles as supervisors, build trust among the team, and adopt equity-focused practices. I would carry these practices into my relationships and work with the Executive Board, Foundation Board and home office.

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

I am guided by a quote from Hillary Clinton: “Take criticism seriously, not personally.” I apply this to my individual practice and organizations I lead. An innovative and strategic mindset starts with being honest about liabilities and opportunities with a mission-centric focus on organizational outcomes. When considering potential priorities, it is vital to consider prospective approaches from within the organization and creative ideas originating from outside the field. I think of a trusted colleague who will often advance a discussion by inserting an idea from an industry outside of higher education. For example, when our department sought to professionalize crisis response and incident management, we looked at hospital nursing schedules when considering how to organize shifts. I have led the strategic planning process for my organization and contributed to planning for ACUHO-I and my university division. Through its conferences, publications, research activities and advocacy, ACUHO-I creates knowledge that can be applied to the vexing problems we face. As a leader of the Association, as well as a leader on my own campus, I leverage that knowledge with a sense of professional curiosity, openness to new ideas, and commitment to serve the best interests of the association and campus housing profession.

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

When I began my career in residence life, I was gratified by the direct connections I had with students and the opportunity to witness their success – and lend support -- firsthand. As my career progressed, I had less and less direct contact with students while my zone of influence widened.

This progression will sound familiar to many of you. In the current stage of my career, my greatest influence on students is communicated through the staff in my department. I pour into the staff as a means to positively impact students and maximize a positive work experience. My recent leadership activities in ACUHO-I echo a commitment to professional development. I dedicated seven years to NHTI -- as faculty member, committee member, and coordinating committee chair -- followed by a year co-chairing the Leadership Academy committee, investing in the development of newer professionals. I take seriously the opportunities to provide development and role modeling. I am an authentic, approachable, and transparent leader who creates opportunities for growth and encourages professional curiosity. For those familiar with the restorative approach and the social discipline window...I endeavor to lead with people and believe that doing so maximizes investment, outcomes and growth.