

Chris MacDonald

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Assistant Vice President, Student Success and Well-Being

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

The nearly 15 years of advancement in Residence Life equally inform my understanding, preparation and competence for the role as Business Practices & Enhancement Director as my last 15 years leading 3 different housing programs. Navigating daily operations of conferencing, managing the realities of over occupancy, and the exponential growth in frequency and scope of crisis management provide invaluable context to my proficiency in the administration of campus housing and enterprise management. Entering into this profession as an educator and community builder, I had to seek out learning experiences, direct study and mentoring from knowledge experts to understand the function and successful execution of the financial elements of campus housing programs. The cornerstones of my competency development have been expert colleagues, growing job responsibilities and learning experiences through professional development within ACUHO-I. Leading housing programs, I have: participated in the execution of numerous market analysis for new-build opportunities and housing rate thresholds, developed and reviewed annual budgets and proformas, negotiated contract terms and sponsorships, and evaluated procurement positions on items from furniture, to software and uniforms. As campus housing confronts dynamic changes in expectation and available resources, my experiences and orientation are ideally suited to serve in this role.

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

I will bring curiosity to this role and the Executive Board. I have always had an insatiable curiosity for things that interest me; and for my entire adult life that has been the value and impact of living on campus for college students. The beginning of my career it was micro-focused: in-hall, in-room experiences that would lead to the outcomes I experienced as a college student. As I concluded my hands-on in-hall roles, my curiosity turned to and has grown in developing expertise in the macro that make the micro possible: budget, systems, partnerships, strategy, analysis, processes and policies. The same is true for my development within ACUHO-I. My curiosity has been, and will continue to be, the bedrock of my service to ACUHO-I. My experiences of attending conferences, presenting and volunteering, led me to consider what more I could offer the organization, and sought out more significant roles to support ACUHO-I. The learning opportunities participating as an active member of the association is unrivaled, and the roles ACUHO-I plays in articulating the realities, identifying and exploring the impact on students and professionals alike, and creating purpose driven engagement are unparalleled in student affairs.

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

Change, flexibility and adaptivity are not situational but a constant in our field. While the goals and many outcomes can remain thematically constant, the constructs in which we achieve them requires the ability to discover and account for different inputs and even paradigm shifting adjustment. As a board member, it would be a responsibility to represent and advocate for different perspectives. Serving as the Business Practices & Enhancement Director, I would champion identifying opportunities for the organization to fulfill its mission in supporting members and their roles in the sustainable vibrancy of the campus housing experience. I share my orientation towards Patience, Grace and Trust (PGT) with the teams I serve with on campus. For me, these attributes support organizational health, especially when faced with challenging situations and creative solutions. Leading and collaborating with PGT creates an environment where roles are not as important as culture, and makes groups dedicated to a mission confident in their responsibilities. This is especially true when priorities and methods must change to achieve their mission.

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

From some perspectives, campus housing can appear as simple, even linear in its enterprise. Sell your product and sustain the commercial relationship through services to fortify demand. To be fair, this is a reasonable assumptive perspective. But as an experienced leader in this endeavor, I am resolute in my belief that there is nothing more nuanced and dynamic than what do in higher education. As a member of the board, I will bring my experience in anticipating change, analyzing data, and making decisions to support ACUHO-I being relied upon as the vehicle many members seek for collaborative engagement and answers to questions that impact our “simple endeavor”. It can be daunting to consider the scope of the human condition that impacts the residential experience and the campus housing enterprise; personal agency, financial health, cultural influence, local code variances, state and national policy shifts to name just a few. My curiosity informs my strategic thinking, the information I seek and options I identify to support decisions. I would be ardent in engaging the board in its responsibility for being out front, facilitating conversations and creating resources to fortify association members to contend with “what’s next?” and “how do we do this?”.

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

I believe developing others is an intentional orientation to resource management. Responsible for the development of a large team of colleagues ranging in experience from brand new student staff to veteran professionals, my role is to ensure that resources are available and accessible for their development. Next, is marketing and delivering those resources so they confidently utilize them. The diversity of resources needed to support Association members continues to evolve, and it is essential for the board to respond to changing expectations around content, tempo, mode of

delivery and cost. The Association's mission can only be realized through an engaged membership, and as a member of the board, I would lean on my history of participating, delivering and evaluating formal development opportunities such as NHTI & SHOI, and public policy tool boxes. But would encourage aggressive efforts spent on informal and accessible avenues for development. These opportunities create spaces where roles are less important than the ideas and experiences that inform our practice. If navigating COVID taught us anything it is well researched papers and sessions are invaluable, but a compilation of commentary or experience driven narrative exchange can actively shift understanding and develop competencies.