

Chair-Elect

The Chair for the Graduate Students and New Professionals Community of Practice provides leadership, oversight, and support to the Directorate and membership. The GSNPCoP has a large Directorate which consists of four areas: Convention Experience, Networking, Operations, and Professional Development.

Candidates

Blanca Moncada

Gender Pronouns: she/ella

Institution or Organization: San José State University

Title/Position: Coordinator for Academic Success

Classification: New Professional

Please tell us about your interest in applying for a leadership position for the Graduate Students and New Professionals Community of Practice and elaborate on the vision and goals you have for the position(s) you're interested in and the areas they oversee.

I first joined the Graduate Students and New Professionals Community of Practice in 2022 as the Coordinator for Professional Engagement. I was fortunate to serve in that role for 2 terms. This past term, I have served as the Vice Chair of Professional Development. I have thoroughly enjoyed my three years in GSNP thus far because of the development I received and the community and friends I found within the GSNP directorate. I am interested in continuing to serve in the GSNP directorate, in the position of Chair-Elect, because I want to continue uplifting and creating a directorate community that strives to form a broader community within ACPA through our events and mentorship opportunities.

As Chair-Elect, the position holder is tasked with leading a whole team and serving as the advocating GSNP voice within different ACPA leadership circles. If elected into this role, my hope is to connect GSNP directorate and general members to other ACPA entity spaces and event spaces so we can broaden our reach within ACPA. We have done an excellent job in fostering relationships across ACPA and I want to help strengthen those and create even more!

Additionally, I want to help each sub-area of GSNP (Convention Experience, Networking, Operations and Professional Development) create legacy events such as a social media branding, CSAM webinar series, Networking Circles that ACPA members can recognize as a GSNP tradition. My hope with this plan is to allow folks to hone in on specific events while also allowing the ability to dream big in other event ideas. With these legacy events, it is the hope that it will lessen workload in other areas to allow for critical imagining for other events that folks want to implement.

Finally, I want to work with all of directorate to create space for doctoral students to exist and find community in. While we have the Growing Knowledge Series that supports recent doctors in practicing presenting their work, I want to explore how we can provide space for those currently in their doctoral journey whether that be through Pro-Devo webinars or Networking Sessions.

As a coordinator and Vice Chair, I know I looked up to the Chairs and Chair-Elects at the time as the folks to advocate, support, and uplift me and my ideas. My hope, if elected, is to keep that same energy of support and continue cultivating a wonderful directorate community that then waterfalls into an amazing GSNP membership experience for folks not in the directorate.

Please tell us about your previous leadership experience within the Graduate Students and New Professionals Community of Practice. How has this experience prepared you for the position(s) you are applying for? Feel welcome to also speak of leadership experience outside of the CoP and how it will prepare you for the position(s).

I have been fortunate to serve in the directorate for 3 years, 2 years as the Coordinator for Professional Engagement and 1 year as the Vice Chair of Professional Development. In these 3 years, I have learned so much about what it means to create events for GSNP but also how to collaborate with each sub-area of GSNP and with other entity groups. Serving as a Coordinator provided me with the opportunity to understand the coordinator experience and what could be needed for support. Serving as a Vice Chair provided me the opportunity to learn how to lead a team and adjust support style to fit various coordinator needs. I also learned how to support collaboration as a VC across different areas and entity groups.

Outside of GSNP, in my current job, I supervise a team of 25 student staff, 1 student assistant, and 7 Faculty members. With a team of 33, I have had to learn what it means to be a contact person for so many people in addition to supporting a vast variety of needs and development. I believe that my current role has prepared me to effectively support a directorate board and serve as Chair.

While I have these various leadership experiences, I understand that this position will be a learning experience and transition not only for myself but also for the directorate. If elected into this role, I aim to provide opportunities for folks to give continuous feedback regarding their experiences so I can learn how to be a better Chair and leader as I adapt and grow into the role.

As you know, ACPA has a bold Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization. Please speak to what you know of the Imperative and how you see the work of the Graduate Students and New Professionals Community of Practice supporting the Imperative.

The Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization was created to provide a framework for the association to utilize when intentionally creating spaces, events, and

professional homes for ACPA members and non-members. It also serves as a reminder to center voices most minoritized and marginalized in our conversations and event planning.

Currently, we discuss the imperative during our June retreat and our mid-year retreat. In this discussion, we talk about how we can meet different aspects of the imperative based on our GSNP functional areas. My hope is to continue these formative conversations during retreats, but I would also create check-in points during directorate meetings (at least once or twice a semester) where we can have a discussion about how we are supporting the imperative in our work. This additional discussion can provide a reminder for folks that may need a reminder of what we created at the beginning of each term but to also re-evaluate if what we created is still pertinent or if they need to be adapted.

The imperative is an important foundation for our work and I have seen the ways our team has followed the imperative, even if we may not know that it aligns with the imperative. I want us to be able to continue creating conversations with the goal that we are able to name aspects of the imperative in our work, especially when it comes to telling non-directorate members how our work aligns with the imperative.

These roles require advocacy for the field's graduate students and new professionals. Please tell us about your previous experience working with or advocating for graduate students and new professionals outside of the Graduate Students and New Professionals Community of Practice and how you would integrate these unique needs and experiences into work within the CoP.

In my former role as Residence Director, I advocated for a better graduate student experience for our GAs in my department. This entailed advocating for recognition of their boundaries but also advocating for specific tailored professional development training sessions during the annual Summer training. This also allowed me to lead a session during the most recent summer training regarding boundary setting and time management as a graduate student.

In my current role as the Coordinator for Academic Success, I have been in discussion with my supervisor regarding placement of themed communities. Currently our themed communities are situated in one building which only provides that particular experience to one Residential Life Coordinator. I am working with our Housing Leadership on what it would look like to move themed communities to provide other Residential Life Coordinators with that professional development experience.

How would the role(s) you are interested in align with your professional goals?

My professional goals, if accomplished, entail leading a team that is composed of graduate students and new professionals. Serving as Chair of GSNP can provide great professional development opportunities for me to enhance my understanding of what graduate students and new professionals experience while entering the field and ensure that I stay up to date on

how I can be an effective and good leader. This Chair position also provides the opportunity for me to lead a large team of individuals that is composed of smaller teams within the larger group. This opportunity will help me grow in my leadership skills particularly in pulling back and observing and supporting the big picture while entrusting others to implement their ideas while stepping in wherever needed and asked.

Additionally, this role requires the position holder to be in spaces with higher admin leaders that graduate students and new professionals do not traditionally receive a spot in. This role will provide me the professional development of sitting in these spaces that I can then bring back to be a better chair but also a better professional in my job where I do find myself having to speak to higher admin about my plans for our Themed Communities and Faculty-in-Residence programs.

Please speak to your time and energy management, and project management skills and how you believe these will serve you within the position(s) you are applying for.

The main two aspects of my time and energy management are open communication and boundary setting. Open communication entails communicating about my boundaries, capacity, and ability. As Vice Chair, I have learned that it is okay to be open about capacity limits and boundaries and it is okay to ask for help as a leader. If elected, I aim to continue this way of communication because while I may be a leader of a team, I can still rely on the team to support me. I also plan to inform my supervisor once elected to ensure that I have the proper support I need in my job to ensure that I can dedicate time to our directorate and this position.

Additionally, I rely heavily on my google calendar and physical to-do lists to map out my tasks for all roles I serve in. Each role has its own to-do list and color on my calendar. This allows me to track what I need to do and how I am mapping out my time. My project management also entails that I do weekly self-checks on Mondays to ensure that I am well prepped to handle the week's tasks.

Finally, I hope to block admin time in my calendar for GSNP tasks to ensure that I am completing my Chair responsibilities and other tasks asked of me in a timely manner. With this action plan for time management in place, I can ensure that I am supporting this team to the best of my ability.

Maddy Wilson

Gender Pronouns: she/her

Institution or Organization: Boise State University

Title/Position: Student Organizations Coordinator

Classification: New Professional

Please tell us about your interest in applying for a leadership position for the Graduate Students and New Professionals Community of Practice and elaborate on the vision and goals you have for the position(s) you're interested in and the areas they oversee.

I am applying for all three available leadership positions – Chair, Vice Chair for Networking, and Vice Chair for Convention Experience – within the Graduate Students and New Professionals Community of Practice. In the past three years, I have held directorate board positions within three different committees, each providing me with valuable knowledge and skills that would contribute to my leadership as a Chair or Vice Chair. ACPA is my professional home, and the GSNPCoP community is the reason I have felt belonging not only in the organization but also the field of student affairs, generally. My passion for this work and the connections I have made drive me to return to the directorate board each year. The leadership of this board has built my confidence and secured my value as an educator; I want to make other graduate students and new professionals feel the same.

Below I have created a proposal for how I would approach each available position in leadership. I wrote a vision statement that captures my aspirational approach to the role as well as specific goals I hope to achieve. The action items are examples of tasks or projects I would engage with in order to achieve my goals.

Vision Statement: As Chair of the Graduate Students and New Professionals Community of Practice, I plan to collaborate with Vice Chairs to broaden the awareness of GSNPCoP opportunities both internally and externally of ACPA. Additionally, I hope to create a culture of care within the directorate board where Vice Chairs feel equipped to support coordinators and thus, coordinators can meaningfully engage in their roles with peripheral knowledge of how to balance responsibilities.

Goal 1: Develop a system for HESA graduate program communications in collaboration with the Vice Chair of Networking.

- Action Items:
 - Collaborate with the Vice Chair of Networking to establish annual goals related to graduate program involvement. Determine the level of communication and engagement we can implement through the current leadership board.
 - Develop a program to collaborate with graduate program coordinators and present to students about the benefits of GSNPCoP membership/involvement
 - Outreach to other entity leadership about their external communication methods and benchmark best practices for communication with programs that are non-ACPA members.

- Work with the Vice Chair of Networking to create a list of GSNP affiliated (ACPA member institutions, directorate board affiliated institutions, institutions that follow us on social media, etc.) graduate programs.

Goal 2: Expand cross-organizational partnerships with other entity groups to convention programming.

- Action Items:
 - Meet with the Chairs for the Mid-Level Community of Practice and Senior-Level Community of Practice to discuss collaboration opportunities for COPs during convention.
 - Further, propose an expansion opportunity for the Growing Knowledge Series to become a panel presentation during convention, hosted and endorsed by the three entity groups.
 - Propose the opportunity to have Growing Knowledge endorsed sessions that meet the requirements for a standard Growing Knowledge Series webinar but are convention sessions that are endorsed by all three COPs.
 - Collaborate with all Vice Chairs to brainstorm opportunities for collaboration with other entity groups during convention.
 - Determine if there are programs we currently host that could involve collaboration (i.e. endorsed programs, convention colleagues) and develop a list of proposed ideas for working with other entity groups.

Goal 3: Coordinate a leadership-led wellness program within the directorate board.

- Action Items:
 - Create a sign-up schedule for all VCs to lead a 5-minute wellness activity/check-in/advice during directorate board meetings and retreats.
 - Research best practices for communicating with supervisees about wellness and lead a min-workshop with VCs regarding how to support coordinators during varying touchpoints (team meetings, 1:1s, events, convention, etc.) and from differing perspectives (based on identity, position, social influences).
 - Develop a wellness check-in program that VCs can implement during 1:1s with coordinators at the beginning and midpoint of the year.
 - Work with VCs to develop a mini-workshop during spring directorate retreats regarding work-GSNP-life balance and assist coordinators with developing action plans for managing their workload.

Please tell us about your previous leadership experience within the Graduate Students and New Professionals Community of Practice. How has this experience prepared you for the position(s) you are applying for? Feel welcome to also speak of leadership experience outside of the CoP and how it will prepare you for the position(s).

During my three years on the GSNPCoP directorate board, I have held the following positions: Co-Coordinator for Special Events (Professional Development), Co-Coordinator for Cross-Org

Involvement (Networking), and Coordinator for Communications (Operations). Each of these roles was within different teams, positioning me to have a broader perspective on how this community of practice functions. I have learned valuable knowledge from each of these roles that would contribute positively to a role in leadership.

To start, during my role of Co-Coordinator for Special Events, my perception of the value in task management was strengthened. I was working with a Co-Coordinator who relied on me to not only finish my share of the tasks but also contribute to idea generation and provide perspective when faced with challenges (of which there were many). If I did not contribute to the shared responsibility of the role, our programming would not be executed to the best degree. This was an important lesson because as I continued to seek other roles in the directorate, my desire to contribute to a team grew, and I sought roles that required collaboration. If selected for a leadership role, I see this knowledge contributing to my management of coordinators. I will seek to understand the unique dynamics of the team and find opportunities to clearly communicate with my team how each of their roles is of value and when they are successful in their work, everyone benefits.

My role as Co-Coordinator for Cross-Org Involvement reminded me that change can be unpredictable, and when we lose leadership, our work must continue. Halfway through that year, my co-coordinator decided to step down from their position and our team lost the other coordinators shortly after. By spring, our team was myself and the Vice Chair. This was a challenging loss because our team went from five to two people, and there was still the work of five people to be done. Even though we could have given up on programming, my Vice Chair and I still hosted our first engagement panel, an event that required a lot of communication and collaboration. In my future roles with GSNPCoP, I want to channel that persevering attitude when faced with challenges. We may lose leadership, an event may not be successful, tasks might not be completed on time – but when you work with those you have and share the responsibility, we can still achieve what we originally set out to accomplish, just differently.

Most recently, the position of Coordinator for Communications taught me that you cannot just set boundaries and expectations but you must follow them to gain respect. A more challenging part of this role has been not allowing people to submit requests outside of my required timeframe. I am a natural people pleaser, and it is sometimes difficult for me to say 'no' when I am passionate about the success of this directorate board. However, I found that when I do not let people defy the requirements I set, they will course correct and do better the next time. This is a lesson I'm still working on today, even though I know there is a positive outcome. I have recognized that while we all have responsibilities outside of GSNP, if people hold me to a standard of my role, I also have to hold them to a standard, even when I want to say 'yes'. By respecting my own boundaries, I am encouraging others to do the same. In future leadership roles, I want to be the person that can encourage coordinators to set boundaries and uphold them even in challenging situations. My Vice Chair and Chair provided me with that guidance, and I believe my experiences navigating those boundaries would help other coordinators do the same.

As you know, ACPA has a bold Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization. Please speak to what you know of the Imperative and how you see the work of the Graduate Students and New Professionals Community of Practice supporting the Imperative.

The Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization (SIRJD) serves as a starting point for ACPA and its members to address the influence of colonization in higher education work and take action to dismantle unjust systems as a result of settler colonialism. When I first read the SIRJD in graduate school I thought that the application of it would be challenging, but I was wrong.

One of the most salient notes in this imperative is the concept that we should not be waiting for people to step up and be the change, but we can engage in work to become “the leaders we’ve been waiting for” (Quaye et al., 2019, p 10). GSNPCoP is in a position to shape the experience and messaging of ACPA to graduate students and new professionals through our programming and communication. We have a responsibility as an entity to not only educate our members about the framework in this imperative but also inspire and motivate our audience to be the people who can make the changes we want to see in higher education. Furthermore, everyone in our community has a shared responsibility to dismantle racial inequities and settler colonialism, but as leaders, we need to encourage our members to take personal responsibility for their role in these systems. This starts with conversation and authentic dialogue.

A core tenant of the SIRJD is to root the work we do in curiosity (Quaye et al., 2019). As leaders on this board, we can engage members in dialogue when we open the opportunity for genuine curiosity. One quote that resonates with me from the imperative that speaks to this concept is as follows: “While in dialogue on difficult topics, student affairs educators must be willing to listen to the contributions of others if they expect their voice to be heard,” (Quaye et al., 2019, p. 15). It can be challenging for some who have never explored their role in these harmful systems to address the ways their existence contributes to racial inequity. By encouraging thoughtful and respectful dialogue with our members, directorate leaders can show that we are committed to engaging in continual recognition of these topics and bringing a variety of voices into Conversation.

Beyond creating space for dialogue, our directorate board must make annual commitments to address the concepts posed in the imperative and conceptualize methods for taking action internally and externally of ACPA. The SIRJD points to the concept of “an always becoming” (Quaye, 2019), which I interpret as determining what we as a community and as individuals can do to help keep graduate students and new professionals motivated to engage in tough dialogues and take action while also recognizing that the SIRJD is not a final solution to addressing inequity. Our work does not have a foreseeable end point, so as leaders, we have to assess the ways we influence our audience to move beyond conversation to finding actionable changes that can be made in home communities to dismantle settler colonialism-based systems and address racial inequities.

These roles require advocacy for the field's graduate students and new professionals. Please tell us about your previous experience working with or advocating for graduate students and new professionals outside of the Graduate Students and New Professionals Community of Practice and how you would integrate these unique needs and experiences into work within the CoP.

Through my work with the University of Iowa (UI), both as a graduate student and new professional, I engaged with opportunities to show representation of graduate students and new professionals as well as experiences that advocated for their success.

To speak to my general support of graduate student success, I served as a Member of the Grants Committee for the Graduate and Professional Student Government at UI. In this role, I was a voting member on requests from graduate and professional students to fund travel, research, or service. The opportunity to serve on this board was afforded to graduate students, and I was the only member of the College of Education selected to be a part of the committee. This experience afforded me the opportunity to be a part of a team that made decisions on how to support graduate student development opportunities and allowed me to positively represent graduate education students.

Additionally, as both a graduate student and new professional, I was a mentor for the UI Educational Studies and Human Relations undergraduate mentorship program, run by two HESA graduate students, to support students in that program of study. For two years I was a mentor, and during this time, I assisted my mentee with developing their resume, cover letter, crafting emails to solicit letters of recommendation, and reviewing their materials to apply to an education graduate program. Further, this student is first-generation, and a lot of our mentoring sessions focused on how they navigate educational spaces and providing context for how the university functions. This role helped me learn how to articulate complex university processes to undergraduate students and by doing so, I assisted a future educator with the knowledge and advice for being successful in graduate school.

When I joined the GSNPCoP directorate board, I was between my first and second year of graduate school, looking for a community where I felt belonging. As I started my role and developed relationships with the board, I started internally articulating the challenges I faced in my graduate program that led to my lack of satisfaction with the connections I made. After talking with a mentor, I developed a presentation idea for the ACPA23 Convention, focusing on how HESA programs do or do not support graduate students. This proposal was accepted for convention, and I presented my session: "Graduate Student Success: Cultivating Care for Self and Community". To prepare, I interviewed multiple M.A., Ph.D., and new professionals regarding their experiences with support from their graduate programs. Coupled with research on best practices for aiding graduate student success, I presented on these experiences and engaged the audience in a reflective conversation on how support for HESA graduate students is a community effort that everyone can and should contribute to. I received positive feedback on this presentation, and specifically, from professionals working with graduate students who were seeking advice on how to better engage with them. By giving this presentation, I was able

to use both individual testimonials and research to advocate for the graduate student experience.

One of the last experiences I want to include is a presentation I collaborated on with a HESA graduate student during my first year as a new professional. I had met this student through our association with the program, and both of our graduate internships were within academic support. She worked specifically with first-generation student advocacy programs, and I had worked with Supplemental Instruction leaders. A core tenant of the work done in that office was to facilitate a growth mindset in the Iowa community. Later, when working as a new professional, I received an email soliciting presentation proposals for the Iowa LatinX Youth Summit that brought high schoolers to the university to learn new skills and explore higher education. I asked the graduate student (who had become a good friend) if she wanted to collaborate on a presentation, and even though she had never done something like this, she said yes. We created a proposal that was accepted and were invited to give our presentation: "Overcoming Self-Doubt Through a Growth Mindset". Through this experience, I was able to support a HESA graduate student in stepping outside their comfort zone in an educational setting while contributing to a university program planned primarily by new professionals.

Each of these opportunities have uniquely contributed to my experiences representing and advocating for graduate students and new professionals. As a leadership member in this CoP, I want to continue facilitating care for graduate students and find further opportunities to bolster professional development experiences within our community.

How would the role(s) you are interested in align with your professional goals?

Becoming the Chair for the Graduate Students & New Professionals Community of Practice would allow me to serve the community in a greater role. At my first Convention, ACPA22, I signed up for the GSNPCoP email list not realizing how much that decision would impact me both personally and professionally over the following three years. As a graduate student, I struggled to find belonging in my program and was looking for a higher education community where I felt accepted. GSNPCoP (and ACPA generally) became my professional home from that convention on. I have gained confidence in my skills, validation of my purpose in higher education, and strong relationships through my three years with the directorate board. Now, I want to be the person who can make that impact on other graduate students and new professionals. By becoming Chair I would be supporting our community at a broader level, and my hope is to provide a space for graduate students and new professionals to thrive.

Furthermore, I also want experience leading student affairs professionals. I have supervised or advised students in all of my professional roles, but my goal is to step into a position of supervising full-time, professional staff in the next five years. By serving in the Chair role the next three years (including elect and past chair) I would gain a more critical understanding of the needs and challenges new professionals face.

Becoming Chair would also be a catalyst for me to advocate for Boise State to become a member institution with ACPA. Currently, Boise does not have any institutional memberships to higher education associations, and there is a general lack of awareness around the purpose of these organizations among staff. When I worked at Iowa, we had an institutional membership that allowed individual members to gain discounted rates on membership and convention registration as well as developed a network of professionals that could connect professionally through the organization. In my current office, most people do not attend conferences because there are limited funds, and not many people know about the professional development opportunities available to them. During my time at Boise State, I want to develop a proposal in collaboration with other staff members to the Professional Staff Association to advocate for an institutional membership to ACPA. While being Chair is not required for this proposal, I believe serving in this position would enhance my knowledge of the ACPA organization and show that Boise State staff can and do hold leadership positions in ACPA.

Please speak to your time and energy management, and project management skills and how you believe these will serve you within the position(s) you are applying for.

A 50-50 work-life balance is not a goal that I strive for. When I was in graduate school we had conversations in class about how to leave your work at the office. We were encouraged to follow the normative balance of working 8-5 and then wiping our hands clean before we head home. This narrative does not suit me.

I work in Student Involvement; thus, my work schedule is never strictly 8-5. My first year as a new professional being involved in GSNPCoP, finishing graduate school full-time, being involved on-campus, and keeping up with a social life challenged me to reimagine what work-life balance means to me. Now, I imagine it as a give and take. Some weeks I give more so that other weeks I can take more. This is a system that keeps my motivation levels steady and encourages me to manage my time more efficiently. I am not overworking myself without a break, and I am not giving all of my energy to work without taking it back for myself.

Specifically relating to managing time efficiently, my professional role demands a lot on a day-to-day basis. As is common in higher education, previously, my role was two full-time positions. But it is now one position where “half” of my time is intended to be spent supervising my 23 student media employees, and the other “half” is spent supporting 87 student organizations in event and program planning. Nevermind, the advising duties and other responsibilities that come with each of these roles. I am no stranger to the importance of time management; my days are dutifully planned to encourage efficiency and structure. However, I leave room for the inevitable interruptions induced from working directly with students. Sometimes my days are completely thrown off. But I am a planner, so at the start of the next day, I rethink my agenda to prioritize what needs to be done.

Project and time management is integral to my professional work. I have developed systems that have allowed me to be successful in my work even throughout my three years of directorate roles. If given the opportunity to be in a leadership role, I plan to set weekly and monthly goals

to keep myself and my team on track. If there is a struggle or pain point, I want to work through that with the individual or team to ensure those on this board are supported but also held accountable for communicating when assistance is needed.