

# Vice Chair for Networking

*The Networking team is committed to bridging our community with the larger ACPA organization through various engagement opportunities. We create a welcoming and informed environment for aspiring and new professionals that encourages development and fosters lasting professional relationships.*

## Candidates

### Sydney Rubin

Gender Pronouns: she/her

Institution or Organization: The Ohio State University

Title/Position: Recruitment and Engagement Specialist

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 excited to apply for the Vice Chair of Networking position within the Graduate Students and New Professionals Community of Practice. In this role, I look forward to providing resources and support to GSNP members to learn and grow, while offering intentional support to the Coordinators for Member Engagement and Cross-Organizational Involvement. Specifically, I have four goals I would like to achieve during my time as Vice Chair of Networking:

1. Utilize the ACPA Member Portal to its full potential to promote events and communicate with members and other entity groups.
2. Align the Networking Team and the Professional Development Team to create a unified experience for members.
3. Collaborate among the Communities of Practice to create mentorship and purposeful networking opportunities.
4. Increase member retention through intentional member engagement events and communication.

*Utilize the ACPA Member Portal to its full potential to promote events and communicate with members and other entity groups.* The ACPA Member Portal has been revitalized in recent years but has not been used to its full potential due to a lack of training and transparency for members. One of my goals is to make the Member Portal the hub for all things GSNP in the GSNPCoP Workspace. This is a place where we can advertise events hosted by GSNP, other

entity groups, and the ACPA International Office. We can also have discussion boards and share important files that will allow members to feel engaged between events. I think having a centralized place for members to engage with one another, beyond the website, is important for retaining members year to year. One challenge I anticipate with utilizing the member portal more is that many graduate students and new professionals may not be ACPA members yet, so there may be double advertising to members in the portal and to the public on the GSNP website. However, offering more connection within the member portal may incentivize GSNP potentials to join ACPA as members. Overall, I hope to gain a good understanding of the member portal and then be able to share this information with the directorate and members to create a centralized hub for all.

*Align the Networking Team and the Professional Development Team to create a unified experience for members.* In my short time with GSNP, I have often found it confusing as to where the line is drawn between networking and professional development because, to me, networking is an essential part of professional development. However, conversations and event coordination are often siloed to each respective team. Additionally, since member engagement falls under networking, it would make sense for professional development and networking to work more closely to gain feedback from members about what PD webinars they would like to attend (also tying in Operations for some assessment!) and to advertise PD events to GSNP members (through the Member Portal!). Additionally, for cross-organizational involvement, it would be helpful to know what webinars are being held to share with other entity groups within ACPA. There may be webinars where it makes sense to ask experts from across ACPA more broadly to help facilitate, and in that case, the cross-organizational involvement coordinators should be the point of contact and coordinate their involvement. I also hope that collaborating more intentionally between the two areas will allow for less overprogramming, more availability to host events, and efficient utilization of directorate talents and time. I believe there are ways to streamline these processes and make the directorate a more cohesive and collaborative team.

*Collaborate among the Communities of Practice and other entity groups to create mentorship and purposeful networking opportunities.* As one of the current cross-organizational involvement coordinators, this has been one of my strategic goals this year that I would like to expand upon in my time as Vice Chair of Networking. I think there is untapped networking and mentoring potential within the Mid-Level Community of Practice and Senior-Level Community of Practice. I would love to implement CoP Conversations, perhaps bi-monthly (every other month), leading up to the convention with an opportunity to have a CoP social at the convention. I think convention colleagues is a good place for similar conversations at Convention, but for those unable to make it to Convention, they miss out on a lot of networking conversations that we have the potential to bring to the virtual world. GSNP is not meant to be a forever home for ACPA members, so we need to showcase options for where they can continue to grow once their time in GSNP comes to an end. I think having these meetings will also provide a career roadmap for graduate students and new professionals by learning from MLCOP and SLCOP and their current roles and higher education journey. This can also potentially help retain dedicated professionals in higher education as they connect and learn that there is a path to more responsibility and (hopefully) a higher salary.

*Increase member retention through intentional member engagement events and communication.* To sustain the good work that GSNP strives to produce, I think it is important to grow and retain our member base. I think all of my previous goals will hopefully positively affect member retention, but beyond those three ideas, I think there are other ways we can show members how much we value them. ACPA has started the Unsung Hero shoutouts, and I think this is something we can implement at the GSNP level with a Member of the Month social media post. Perhaps, we highlight members who engaged in events that month. I don't think that the only time we can provide recognition has to be at the convention. In fact, I think that member retention would increase if we engaged with members throughout the year in meaningful ways. I also think that having more intentional conversations and outreach to members could be helpful. Perhaps, that is an email writing campaign from directorate members to potential new members or incentivizing social media follows. I think these are some low-lift efforts that could make a big impact on member retention.

I am hopeful that with a strong Networking team and directorate leadership open to collaboration, I can achieve these goals to make the experience for members and those looking to join GSNP and ACPA meaningful and engaging.

**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).**

Within GSNP, I have had the pleasure of serving as an Ambassador, Scholarships and Awards Coordinator on the Convention Experience team, and I currently serve as one of the Cross-Organizational Involvement Coordinators on the Networking Team. While not done on purpose, I think the order and amalgamation of these positions have served me well to lead the Networking Team successfully as a Vice Chair.

In my role as an Ambassador, I was tasked with learning the mission and vision of ACPA broadly to share with graduate students and new professionals who might be searching for a professional home within higher education. Learning this information was helpful to understand GSNP's role within the organization, while also understanding the purpose of different entity groups and how to connect members to the right entity group for them and their interests. Being an Ambassador also allowed me to connect monthly with higher education professionals across the country to discuss successes and challenges we faced in our own spheres of the field. Having this connection was so important as we discussed national, statewide, and local changes to the field and worked together to spread information about how to get involved in ACPA. I met people I never would have engaged with if it were not for being an ACPA Ambassador, and I hope to continue engaging with others and creating connection points for GSNP members as a leader of the Networking Team.

After serving as an Ambassador, I knew my time with GSNP was not done. I applied for the

Scholarships and Awards Coordinator position to stay connected to the higher education field as I searched for a full-time job after graduating from grad school. Being the Scholarships and Awards Coordinator was the perfect next step for me because the process was very straightforward thanks to many of the coordinators who came before me. The process is very detailed and requires the coordinator to be mindful of deadlines, confidentiality, and volunteers' time. The attention to detail and self-motivation the Scholarships and Awards position requires will prove beneficial as a Vice Chair, as well.

Through targeted marketing on LinkedIn, emails to graduate programs, and social media, I was able to increase the overall scholarship applications, among the three types, by 23.53%. One thing I think that helped increase the applications was using the same application for all three types of scholarships, which was something I implemented. I think this encouraged more people to apply, instead of having to fill out multiple applications for each scholarship they wanted to be considered for. On the awards side of the position, I enjoyed hearing stories of the wonderful achievements of graduate students, new professionals, and their supporters through the nomination process, again, allowing me to connect with professionals across the country. I also think recognition is a huge part of retention and may play a role in higher education professionals wanting to engage with GSNP and/or stay engaged with ACPA. Through scholarships, I was able to connect people with funds to obtain a professional development experience that will allow them to grow as people and professionals. Through awards, I was able to connect people through recognition and encouragement. I hope to continue to connect professionals with each other and others in ACPA as the Vice Chair of Networking.

Finally, this year, I have had the honor of serving as one of the Cross-Organizational Involvement Coordinators. This position has been the most enlightening in terms of how GSNP engages with members of ACPA more broadly. The Communities of Practice are unique in the entity space, in that they are not meant to be forever homes for ACPA members. Instead, they are meant to be temporary spaces for members to grow, learn, and connect. In my role as Cross-Organizational Involvement Coordinator, it is my hope to connect members of GSNP to their next entity group, leadership role, mentor, or peer that opens the door for future engagement with ACPA. GSNP plays an even more unique role within the Communities of Practice because it is often the first connection a member may make with ACPA and higher education. With the great resignation and more and more people choosing to leave higher education, I believe that GSNP can play a bigger role in retaining and developing passionate higher education professionals by providing networking opportunities that make sense in the current landscape of higher education. Ensuring that members have opportunities to create connections while in GSNP and know where they can continue to make connections beyond GSNP is something I look forward to leading as the Vice Chair of Networking.

Overall, I believe I am uniquely qualified to lead the Networking Team given my acute awareness of ACPA broadly as well as my behind-the-scenes knowledge of convention experience and networking.

**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.**

It is my understanding that the main goal of the strategic imperative is to implement strategies to reduce the oppression of communities of color, especially at the intersections of their identities, recognizing that all forms of oppression are interconnected. This recognition is crucial to inform policies, practices, and programs that will reshape the landscape of higher education and make it an environment that is inclusive, accessible, and just for all. The SIRJD's companion publication, the Campus Racial Justice and Decolonization Expectations Project, goes deeper into how to actualize the SIRJD, introducing the 3x3 Possibility Model focusing on the individual, group, and system: learning, doing, and being. I think this is something that we can actualize ourselves within GSNP. I think the area with the most potential is the impact that we can make as a group by learning, doing, and being.

- **Group Learning:** There is no one way to reach and impact all graduate students and new professionals. Everyone has unique and individual needs that will impact how they interact with programs, webinars, etc. I think it is important that we are aware of our unconscious biases and proactively address them. This can be a collaborative effort of holding each other, as directorate leaders, accountable.
- **Group Doing:** A huge way the Networking Team can contribute to the SIRJD and CRJDEP is that the Networking events are free for everyone. This can reduce a potential barrier a graduate student or new professional may face in participating in ACPA. Additionally, GSNP can create a culture for open and honest dialogue to support peers, members, and colleagues of color. As a leader, I hope to create transparent channels for feedback that allow my team to feel valued and heard. As someone in a leadership role, I hope to use this position to advocate on behalf of those who are unable to or do not have access to advocate for themselves. I think this also applies to GSNP more broadly as we are seen as the voice of graduate students and new professionals within ACPA.
- **Group Being:** I think we have already begun doing this with the creation of the Process Task Force, but to sustain a just, fair, and accessible community of practice, it is imperative to examine our practices and policies and make sure they can be easily followed by all potential members of current and future directorates. Within the Networking Team, I hope to, as a team, examine some of the ways we have done things previously and discuss if it makes the most sense to continue as is or redirect efforts.

The SIRJD also centers love in the work it strives to achieve. To build upon this, I think at the center of love is connection, and I hope what you have gathered and will continue to throughout the rest of my answers, is that connection is imperative to the work of GSNP and the Networking Team. The reason we show up and volunteer our time to GSNP and ACPA is because we love the work we do, we love each other, and we love creating opportunities for others to get

involved, get excited, and find their professional home. Love is at the center of the SIRJD and it's also at the center of GSNP. Love and connection are essential to ensure we are showing up for each other, holding each other accountable, and providing meaningful opportunities for graduate students and new professionals. I also think GSNP may be someone's entry point into ACPA and making sure they feel the love and get connected to those who they need to is critical to retain them within higher education and ACPA.

**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.**

One of my top five strengths according to the Clifton Strengths assessment is Developer. I recognize and cultivate the potential in others. I spot the signs of each small improvement and derive satisfaction from evidence of progress. I think this applies greatly to how I would work to support the unique needs and experiences of graduate students and new professionals. I have a few examples of how I have done this in the past.

In a past role, I worked with junior and senior students in an intense, experiential program. We called it a young professional bootcamp. While they may have been students when they were in the program, many of them would reach out once they were new professionals to navigate networking, interviewing, and salary negotiation. I was able to support former students and new professionals as they explored post-graduation opportunities and what made sense for them. Additionally, in this role, I started a weekly newsletter during COVID-19 to connect program alumni to opportunities, whether they be webinars, part-time jobs, or full-time experiences. Many alumni were able to connect with each other and opportunities they may not have gotten otherwise. Connection is integral to networking, and I hope that the GSNP Networking Team can be the gateway to the next great step for a graduate student or new professional.

Additionally, during my time in graduate school, I served as the President of the Higher Education Student Personnel Association (HESPA) at Ohio State and as a Graduate Academic Coach for the Dennis Learning Center, specifically serving graduate students. As President of HESPA, I planned programs around professional development workshops and social events for members of the Higher Education and Student Affairs program. This provided students an opportunity to connect with each other in an environment that can sometimes be isolating. This also allowed students with different backgrounds and perspectives to learn from experts and each other. As a Graduate Academic Coach, I worked individually and in group coaching sessions to discuss learning and management strategies to help graduate students be academically successful. I also led a six-week group coaching workshop called the Productivity Program that allowed graduate students across the university the opportunity to connect with others and share successes and challenges they were facing. Both experiences allowed me to recognize that being a graduate student and a new professional, navigating new environments,

can be isolating and confusing. I hope to address these challenges by connecting graduate students and new professionals with each other to uplift and share strategies for success.

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

This role aligns perfectly with my career aspirations, particularly in developing my supervision skills. In my current full-time role, I do not have the opportunity to supervise full-time staff, and I am eager to take on the responsibility of leading a team of graduate students and new professionals. Being able to set agendas, lead meetings, and manage operational tasks will allow me to gain critical skills that I am unable to acquire in my current full-time role but will need to demonstrate to move up in the field.

Additionally, I hope to continue to grow within ACPA beyond GSNP, and being in a leadership position will allow me to connect with professionals on the Leadership Council, the international office, other entity groups, and the foundation team. I hope to never lose my excitement for the field of higher education and continue to stay involved in ACPA and professional associations. I believe leading the Networking Team and having a leadership role will allow me to stay accountable to myself and others.

**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.**

In my current full-time role, like many of us, I wear multiple hats and balance multiple deadlines. I currently serve as the Recruitment and Engagement Specialist and oversee the recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students (different application deadlines with different needs), my college's Living Learning Community, which consists of 51 first- and second-year undergraduate students, and some of the high school programs that bring 16–18-year-olds to campus to experience college coursework and engage in college-level conversations. My many priorities require me to manage my time efficiently. To do this, I color-coordinate my calendar and block off time for personal and professional development meetings (such as GSNP meetings). This is helpful for me to see how much time I am dedicating to each area and make sure that my time is balanced between all my priorities as it makes sense for the time of year I am in (move-in, recruitment, yield, etc.). I am lucky enough that my full-time role views my time with GSNP as important professional development, so I can dedicate some of my full-time work hours to GSNP work. For project management, I thrive on transparency and context, and hope to bring that to any team I lead. I am big on utilizing resources made available to us in the best way possible, whether that be the Google Suite, Zoom, Member Portal, etc. I believe my time management and project management skills of prioritizing my time and utilizing my resources will allow me to best serve my team and provide them with the training, tools, and time they need to be successful in their roles. I look forward to creating agendas, communication channels, and scheduling meetings to make sure the Networking Team remains on track and on the same page as it relates to our shared and individual goals.

## 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 Vice Chair For Networking, I plan to improve efficiency of member engagement processes and increase communication about GSNPCoP opportunities to membership through collaboration across the directorate board.

Goal 1: Develop and implement a graduate program outreach plan in collaboration with the Chair.

- Action Items:
  - Collect graduate program (master's, doctorate, and current institution) information from all directorate board members on the directorate contact information sheet.
  - Create and update an annual list of all graduate programs associated with GSNPCoP (ACPA member institutions, directorate board affiliated institutions, institutions that follow us on social media, etc.).
  - Collaborate with the Coordinator for Awards & Scholarships to develop an outreach plan to graduate programs regarding award and scholarship opportunities.
  - Create a graduate program email group, and work with the Chair to develop best practices for graduate program outreach.



- Collaborate with the Operations team to cross-promote newsletter offerings to graduate programs.

Goal 2: Improve member communication methods by broadening the partnership between the Operations team and Networking.

- Action Items:
  - Collaborate with the Operations team to cross-promote newsletter offerings to graduate programs.
  - Develop a system with the newsletter coordinator to send information to general members and graduate programs after the newsletter is published.
  - Work with the social media coordinator to broaden the graduate program list based on social media engagement.

Goal 3: Create a Networking handbook that outlines clear processes for Networking tasks such as member outreach, entity group partnerships, and event planning.

- Action Items:
  - Work with all four coordinators in the Networking team to brainstorm a list of processes overseen by the team.
  - In coordination with the Chair and the Operations team, develop a process for member outreach.
  - Define 'membership' in GSNPCoP and determine communication best practices for those who are not annual ACPA members but are involved in GSNP efforts.

**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?**

The role of Vice Chair for Networking directly correlates with my professional interests. Within my first performance review as a new professional, I was told that one of my greatest strengths is my ability to develop relationships with campus partners and encourage mutually beneficial collaboration. This is a strength I have also brought into my role at Boise State and is a skill I want to continue developing within GSNPCoP. When I applied for my second role in the directorate, Co-Coordinator for Cross-Organization Involvement, I sought to translate my collaborative nature into a directorate role. Since then, the Networking team has grown their efforts of entity group collaboration beyond my original goals, and I want to continue this work beyond the coordinator level. Being VC would allow me to further expand on this growth and help specify our processes in order to best support these efforts.

Furthermore, I am also interested in learning more about how decisions are made regarding communication with our membership about involvement. In my role at Boise State, I assist with a lot of our office communication efforts to encourage student involvement, but we are struggling with determining how and when to communicate with students. I believe this VC role will help me develop strategic communication skills related to encouraging involvement and participation in programming.

**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.