

Dear Colleagues,

October 5, 2021

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to nominate myself to run to fill the vacancy in the VP/Secretary position created when Keith Landa was elected President.

All organizations need people to help manage the administrative aspects of the work of the body. An orderly record of proceedings, votes, and reports helps to ensure a full library of references for the body. Support and collaboration for the President is also critical. A president needs good feedback from someone they can bounce ideas around with and someone to serve in their stead should the need arise. As a result, keeping in touch with the President and keeping tabs on issues they feel are important to pursue is an essential part of the role of a Vice President.

Over the course of my life, I have served in various roles on a couple of different Boards of Directors – sometimes as the Secretary, sometimes as Treasurer, but longest as President or Vice President. While serving in these roles I have prepared agendas, taken minutes, written and managed reports, drafted press releases, and provided television news interviews. I have also written resources for the organizations and participated in fundraising and promotional activities. I have met with legislators in Albany at informational fairs and participated in a promotional photo op with then Governor, George Pataki.

While I have had the opportunity to meet and get to know many of you through the Plenaries and the work we do as a body, I recognize that most of you may not know what matters to me and what drives my interest in just about everything I do, so I will share some of that here. From my CV, you can see that I have a strong foundation in education, enjoy teaching, enjoy research, and instructional design and faculty development. In my current position, as the Instructional Designer for Online Teaching and Learning, I get to assist faculty in making their expertise more accessible to their students by helping them learn effective ways to teach online. If I am successful in my work, more students should be successful in their classes and that matters to me. I'm all about ensuring educational opportunity for all.

As the parent of a child with disabilities, and a former Board Member of a local nonprofit health organization, I became a strong advocate for children with specific disabilities and began to leverage my educational background to work with schools and parents to improve the school experiences and learning opportunities of children with disabilities. I think when we talk of serving all students or ensuring access to educational opportunities, it is critical to cast the widest net. We are talking not only about students with disabilities who are protected by law, but also students of difference, who just need education to be more open and flexible. For too long, education has been narrowly defined and normed. Difference matters and is an essential element in society. We need to bring all kinds of difference to the table – artist and scientist, philosopher and pragmatist, musician and storyteller, laborer and strategist. We need all colors, all cultures, all genders, all views. Naturally, there will be points of contention as well as points of commonality, but let's call them opportunities - chances to stretch our minds and become more than we were before by understanding the lived experience of people outside our spheres of influence. Recognize that you are the different one for many people, just as many people are different from you. We have so much to share. We can weave a stronger societal fabric and improve life for all if we can come to understand that difference doesn't have to be threatening, but rather quite valuable and should be the replacement for narrowly defined norms.

This is where I have an interest in shared government and democratic process. I believe it invites all voices; that doesn't mean that all voices participate and figuring why that is would be really interesting. What ideas abide in the silence?

Finally, this is a position to fill a vacancy for the remainder of this academic year. It gives me the opportunity to explore the position before the next full-term vote takes place and allows me to serve at a time when the organization needs someone to do so.

Thanks for reading through and for considering my nomination.

Best,

Diane

Diane Hamilton, Ph.D., CPACC

Senator from the University at Albany (2016-2022)