ACES CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

ACES will hold an election for the offices of president-elect, member-at-large DEIA-elect, and graduate student representation-elect with voting opening November 16. Statements by the candidates for each position are shared here.

ACES President-Elect

Ashley Luedke (running unopposed)

Ashley Luedke is an Associate Professor in the department of Counseling and Human Services in the School of Education at Canisius University, Buffalo, NY where she also serves as the clinical mental health counseling and bridge program coordinator. Luedke is a 2013 graduate of Florida Atlantic University.

Luedke Candidate Statement:

I am honored to be running for the position of President-Elect of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision. I am drawn to this role because I am incredibly passionate about my roles and identity as a counselor educator and supervisor and contributing to the growth of ethical, reflective, and socially responsive counselors. ACES as an organization provides an opportunity to bring together educators, supervisors, clinicians and students in ways that strengthen our profession. For me, ACES has been a way to stay informed and connected, but more importantly, it has challenged me to remain reflective about how I show up in these roles that hold so much value to me.

In addition to being a counselor educator I am a licensed practicing clinician in New York (LMHC-D) and Florida (LMHC). I have been committed to service and the profession throughout my career. I have been a CACREP site team chair for several years. I previously served as the Upstate President for NYACES before being nominated and elected as the Secretary for NARACES. Most recently I served as President for NARACES.

During my time as Upstate President for NYACES I was actively involved in working with NYMHCA, their lobbyist, and local politicians regarding diagnostic privilege. This experience was key in helping me recognize gaps within our profession and the importance of ensuring that our voices are translated into action. As President of NARACES I was able to collaborate with the other region Presidents as well as ACES leadership. These experiences reinforced for me that statements and good intentions matter, but they are not enough. We must be willing to listen to our members, identify

the ever-changing needs and translate those into meaningful action. This is a significant part of what drives me to seek this role.

If you would have asked me ten years ago if I saw myself seeking out leadership positions, I probably would have laughed. Leadership was not something I initially envisioned as part of my professional journey. As it happens for many of us, my first formal leadership role was tasked to me. Following several administrative changes at my university, my program director was named interim dean. As the only tenured faculty member I was named program director. I was hesitant, nervous, and overwhelmed. So, I did what has continued to shape my approach to leadership, I talked with my colleagues. What did they need from me? What did our program need? Then, I simply got to work. My drive and passion for this profession and supporting others, especially new professionals, has allowed me to show up in an authentic and meaningful way.

That experience continues to inform how I show up. My leadership style is relational, collaborative, and action-oriented. I believe effective leadership begins with listening and relationship building to create spaces where people feel heard and valued. What is key is that listening leads to action and when necessary, change. I'm not afraid to speak up, even when doing so carries risks. Some things are too important to avoid because action feels uncomfortable. I also believe in personal accountability and leading with authenticity. These values have allowed me to build teams and relationships grounded in trust. My commitment to this profession and to supporting others, particularly those who are just beginning their career, continues to motivate how I show up as a leader.

In running for this position there are a few specific things at the forefront of my mind, especially in relation to our strategic plan. Being a counselor educator, supervisor, or clinician is no easy task, especially in today's social and political climate. Counselor educators are being censored in some states with what can be taught and counselors told what they can and cannot provide treatment for. My goal would be to create deliberate, practical, and actionable guides and support for counselor educators and supervisors in navigating these threats to the profession. Diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racist practices are critical and core elements of counseling and counselor educator. It is critical that we explore how we continue to support these efforts and the individuals at the front lines of this work.

The role of ACES President is an opportunity to listen, connect, and act at a variety of levels. I want to lead with the same approach that has guided me throughout my experiences so far - listen, build relationships, have difficult conversations and get to work. Thank you for your consideration.

ACES Member-at-Large for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism

John Harrichand
S. Kent Butler

John Harrichand

John Harrichand is an Associate Professor of Counseling at Montclair State University in Montclair, NJ where he also serves as the co-coordinator of the Graduate Program. He received his Ph.D. from Liberty University in 2018.

Harrichand Candidate Statement:

I am seeking the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Member-at-Large for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion position because DEIA must be embedded throughout an organization's culture, leadership, programs, and policies. ACES has been central to my development since I became a member in 2015, Emerging Leader in 2017, and Journal Editorial Fellow in 2018. My committee leadership, conference planning, interest network engagement, scholarship, mentoring, and reviewing demonstrate sustained commitment to ACES. Serving as MAL-DEI is a natural extension of this work and an opportunity to advance culturally relevant counselor education and supervision.

My personal and professional identities also inform my interest. As a biracial immigrant, former international student, counselor, counselor educator, supervisor, and scholar, I understand that belonging requires more than representation; people must experience their identities and contributions as valued and influential. Navigating cultural, racial, national, spiritual, and affectional identity contexts has strengthened my cultural humility, intersectional perspective, and commitment to advocacy. It has also taught me to remain open to perspectives beyond my own and accountable to the communities I serve. The ACES Strategic Plan integrates diversity, graduate student inclusion, resources, social justice, advocacy, and anti-racism across counselor education and supervision. I would advance this framework through three goals.

- **Strengthen DEIA integration and assessment across ACES initiatives.** Working with ACES leaders, committees, interest networks, graduate students, and members, I would identify strengths and gaps in representation, accessibility, cultural relevance, antiracism, and equitable opportunity. Progress measures should examine whom initiatives reach, whose voices shape them, and what impact they have.
- **Expand accessible, culturally responsive resources.** I would support practical tools that translate DEIA principles into teaching, supervision, research, leadership, and counseling, including resources on broaching, power and privilege, relational safety, anti-oppressive practice, mentoring, and advocacy. I would also elevate members whose expertise and perspectives have received insufficient visibility.
- **Bolster pathways for participation, belonging, mentorship, and leadership.** Consistent with the Strategic Plan's emphasis on graduate student inclusion and the diversity pipeline, I would advocate for equitable access to committees, interest

networks, conference programming, mentoring, and leadership. Intergenerational mentorship and intentional sponsorship can enable emerging counselor educators to influence ACES while learning alongside experienced members.

My approach is grounded in servant leadership and collaboration. My guiding belief is that "to serve well, one must lead from a place of wellness." I listen before acting, share power, recognize contributions, cultivate others' leadership, and remain accountable for processes and outcomes. Sustainable DEIA work cannot depend on the repeated emotional labor of marginalized members or depleted leaders.

My leadership style is warm, transparent, organized, and action-oriented. I seek input from those most affected, clarify expectations, and welcome respectful disagreement. I view collaboration as a path to informed and equitable decisions, not consensus for its own sake. When tensions arise, I remain curious, address concerns and power dynamics directly, and help groups move from reflection to action. I celebrate contributions, mentor emerging leaders, and share credit.

My experiences have prepared me for the ACES Governing Council. I co-chaired the ACES 2025 Conference Program and currently co-chair the 2027 program. I previously chaired the ACES Leadership Advisory Group, Leadership and Advocacy Committee, and Special Committee on Leadership and Advocacy, and served as SACES regional facilitator for the ACES International Student and Faculty Interest Network. These roles strengthened my ability to coordinate initiatives, collaborate across units, support volunteers, mentor emerging professionals, and translate ideas into outcomes. The 2023 ACES Professional Leadership Award further affirmed my commitment to ACES members.

My counselor education and supervision expertise spans teaching, clinical supervision, research, service, and presentations at every biennial ACES conference from 2017 through 2025. Sessions have addressed international counseling students, AAPI leadership, allyship, psychological safety and gatekeeping, and professional and legislative advocacy. As an Associate Professor and Graduate Program Co-Coordinator, I prepare master's counselors and doctoral counselor educators through teaching, supervision, mentorship, and program leadership while integrating cultural humility, intersectionality, broaching, power analysis, advocacy, and psychological safety.

DEIA is foundational to my scholarship and engagement. My research addresses international students' racialized belonging, Guyanese American mental wellness, sex trafficking survivors, LGBTQ+ individuals in religious contexts, immigrants and refugees, allyship, BIPOC faculty retention, social justice supervision, and legislative advocacy. Through the EMPOWER Research Lab and Counselors Against Sex Trafficking collaborations, I center underrepresented voices and translate findings into

practice and policy. My DEIA and diverse-classrooms certificates complement work recognized for multicultural leadership, advocacy, counselor education leadership, research, teaching, and service.

I view the MAL-DEI position as both an honor and a responsibility. If elected, I will bring sustained commitment, humility, relational presence, organizational experience, and a willingness to engage difficult questions with courage and care. I will help ACES move from stated commitments to visible, measurable, and sustainable practices that foster equity, accountability, representation, and belonging. Above all, I will work so members across identities, career stages, regions, and professional roles see themselves reflected in ACES and have meaningful opportunities to shape its future. Thank you for considering my candidacy.

S. Kent Butler

S. Kent Butler is Professor and Department Head of Educational Leadership and Counseling. He received his Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from University of Connecticut.

Butler Candidate Statement:

My career has been guided by a commitment to multiculturalism, social justice, equity, inclusion, and access in counselor education and the counseling profession. My leadership, scholarship, teaching, service, and advocacy at local, state, regional, national, and international levels reflect this commitment. I view DEIA not as a trend or stand-alone initiative, but as a foundational responsibility of counselor educators, supervisors, professional associations, and the counseling profession.

My newly published co-edited book, *Mental Health and the Black Man: A Mixtape Experience of Hardship and Harmony*, is an important expression of this commitment. It centers the lived experiences of Black men and creates space for often-overlooked conversations about mental health, hardship, resilience, identity, relationships, culture, and healing. The “mixtape” is a musically inspired metaphor that reflects the complexity and diversity of Black men’s experiences, their voices, stories, struggles, strengths, and pathways toward wellness. This work builds on my scholarship and advocacy related to counseling African American males, African American achievement and success, multicultural counseling, social justice, spirituality, and ethics. It also reflects my belief that scholarship should illuminate lived experiences, challenge limiting narratives, expand professional knowledge, and improve counseling outcomes.

My commitment to DEIA extends beyond scholarship through professional leadership, curriculum development, mentoring, institutional initiatives, policy, and service. Long before DEIA became a widely used organizational framework, I

sought to create opportunities for underrepresented students and professionals, address barriers to participation, advocate for social justice, and prepare counselors to work effectively across differences in culture, identity, and lived experience.

I have served the counseling profession in leadership and governance roles at nearly every level. I am a former President of the American Counseling Association (ACA; 2021–2022) and the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD; 2011–2012), and I served as an ACA Governing Council Representative from 2015–2018. I also served on the AMCD committee that revised the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC). Within ACES and SACES, I served as Conference Coordinator for the 2018 SACES biennial conference in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and remain actively engaged in professional activities. I have also chaired major ACA initiatives, including the 2018 Cultural Encounters Task Force and the 2021 Anti-Racism Task Force.

These experiences reinforced my conviction that professional associations must move beyond statements of commitment and create structures that make equity and inclusion visible, sustainable, and measurable. As Member-at-Large for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, I would bring this action-oriented perspective to ACES while recognizing that meaningful change requires collaboration and listening to members' experiences.

My institutional leadership has further shaped this work. In July 2019, I was appointed Interim Chief Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Officer at the University of Central Florida (UCF), where I addressed institutional climate, curriculum, equity, inclusion, and belonging; supported best practices; and cultivated community connections. This experience strengthened my understanding of how organizational structures, policies, and culture influence individual experiences of belonging, as well as my ability to navigate complex institutional environments and move equity-focused conversations toward action.

For more than 20 years, I have served as a counselor educator and currently hold the rank of Tenured Full Professor and Department Head at my current institution. My leadership, teaching, supervision, scholarship, and mentoring are grounded in multicultural and social justice principles. Through interactive and experiential approaches, I have prepared counselors-in-training to examine culture, privilege, power, oppression, identity, and access and to apply these concepts through ethical, culturally responsive practice. I have led curriculum revisions and equity-focused initiatives and mentored numerous Black and Brown counselors-in-training, many of whom have published and presented with me at ACES and SACES conferences. Developing the next generation of counselors, scholars, educators, and leaders remains one of the most meaningful dimensions of my service and I now do this leading the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling.

My scholarship has received national recognition. My textbook, *Introduction to 21st Century Counseling: A Multicultural & Social Justice Approach*, received the 2022 Most Promising New Textbook Award from the Textbook & Academic Authors Association. I have also received the AMCD Kitty Cole Human Rights Award, served on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Counseling & Development*, and engaged in keynote presentations, invited presentations, and professional partnerships in Europe, Taiwan, Malaysia, Australia, and Africa. These experiences have broadened my understanding of how culture, context, systems, and social conditions influence mental health and counselor education, reinforcing my belief that DEIA work must be locally responsive and globally informed.
I would bring to the ACES Board organizational leadership, scholarly expertise, institutional experience, and a deep commitment to mentoring and developing others. My vision is to expand pathways for diverse leadership; strengthen mentoring and professional development; support inclusive scholarship and resources; and examine policies and practices that affect access, participation, and belonging within counselor education and supervision.

My career has been defined by a commitment to ensuring that the counseling profession sees, hears, and responds to diverse communities. I would be honored to bring my experience as a counselor educator, counselor, supervisor, mentor, scholar, advocate, and leader to ACES as **Member-at-Large for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (2027-2030)**. I remain committed to strengthening the profession, cultivating diverse leadership, amplifying marginalized voices, and helping ACES build an inclusive community in which all members can contribute, lead, and thrive.

ACES Graduate Student-Elect

Sheba Antony
Mikayla Harris

Sheba Antony

Sheba Antony is a doctoral student in Counselor Education and Supervision at The Pennsylvania State University. She holds an LMHC-D (NY), an LPC (CT), and she is a Telehealth Licensed MH Counselor registered in FL.

Antony Candidate Statement:

I would be honored to be join ACES leaderships as a future ACES Graduate Student Representative. I am an exceptional candidate for this position, bringing in my previous clinical, leadership, and community-engaged experiences. I hope to be in community with fellow graduate students, support current needs, and bring our voices to the greater ACES community.

Experiences and Skills

When I started a therapist position at The Renfrew Center of NY, a nationwide eating disorder (ED) treatment center, I was one of few clinicians who identified as BIPOC, and one of even fewer South Asian clinicians at the company. By my last day at Renfrew, three years later, I was a behavioral health team leader for the New York site, the only BIPOC clinician at the site, and one of few in a leadership position across our company nationally. My experiences showed me the underrepresentation within the field as well as the need for intentional support and community for professionals.

I entered the counseling profession by being plunged into finding my bearings in my identities as a BIPOC person and counselor in order to serve the ED community. I approached my doctoral program with a strong counselor identity as a South Asian American cisgender woman specializing in treating clients with eating disorders and disordered eating, dedicated to providing inclusive and anti-racist care. I have a passion for working with BIPOC clients, clients in emerging adulthood, and clients exploring identities. My approach is informed by Health-At-Every-Size, cultural humility, and trauma-informed care. I aim to provide and advocate for fat-positive, weight-inclusive, anti-racist, LGBTQIA+ affirming, and disability-affirming care. I have experience providing counseling services to children, adolescents, and adults in higher level of care settings and in private practice. I am committed to advocating for more education, training, and support for BIPOC mental health care and DEIA within the profession. My strong counseling identity has helped me easily develop my emerging counselor educator identity, as a counselor educator passionate in critical and decolonial approaches to teaching, supervision, and research with co-occurring identity-cognizant professional development. At the completion of my doctoral degree and with leadership opportunities through ACES, I hope to be known as a strong, passionate counselor educator and leader known for being in service to counseling and counselor education professions.

Mentorship and Advocacy

I take pride in pursuing my professional growth, leadership, and advocacy opportunities. Gaining knowledge through continuing education, consultation, and networking augmented my clinical training and Masters education. Going on to lead within professional community spaces, such as student representative positions during my Masters program, co-leading BIPOC ED professional community spaces, and research liaison for the NY chapter of International Association of Eating Disorders Professionals (IAEDP), I received responses on how vital it is for professionals to have acknowledgment, community, and continued education and supervision. As a doctoral student at Penn State, I also saw a need for more community and connections to local opportunities, and have co-founded a new graduate student organization with some members of my cohort to create the space we are craving. These opportunities have allowed me to channel my passion into serving BIPOC communities and other

communities within counseling while also fueling my professional identity, skillset, and professional growth as an emerging counselor educator.

My doctoral studies support my interests in mentorship, training, and supervision across the counseling career lifespan; experiences of BIPOC counselors and counselor educators; professional counselor identity development; BIPOC mental health care and policy; and improving and increasing eating disorder curriculum, training, and research within counseling. Rejoining academic spaces as a doctoral student at Pennsylvania State University, I have had the opportunities to explore these interests through research, conferences, teaching, and continued advocacy. I have also developed more questions and interests in education policy as it relates to inclusive and decolonial practices in counselor education, supervision, and program development. Through my experiences working in Penn State's Department of Educational Equity and Student Disability Resources, I also have helped develop a pilot peer mentorship program for students with disabilities and am excited for continued opportunities within these departments.

Goals as Graduate Student Representative

Through new connections to the ACES and NARACES community, I have been able to meet amazing people through conferences and professional community spaces. I have been grateful for spaces for graduate students and early career graduates, and I hope to support the continuation of spaces and resources like these within ACES. I am excited for new opportunities of serving, learning, and leading available to doctoral students, such as the ACES Graduate Student Representative (GSR) position. As GSR, my goals are to cultivate community spaces for students, foster collaboration for research and advocacy, expand mentorship and professional development opportunities, create avenues for students' voices to be heard and addressed, hold conversations on navigating early career experiences, and advocate for the representation and needs of historically marginalized graduate students.

Leadership Style

Through my exploration of leadership theories, self-reflection, and perceived needs for leadership in counseling and counselor education, I feel aligned most closely with transformational leadership (TL; Bass and Avolio, 1994) approaches and critical models, such as Peters and Vereen's socially just and culturally responsive leadership (SJCRCL; 2020) model, which advance multicultural and social just needs in counseling. Given the counseling field follows the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics (2014), maintaining morality and ethical guidelines is vital and expected for leaders in counseling. As a future counselor educator, I can consider the intersection between morality, ethics, and leadership with the TL model to help conceptualize how I will not only uphold the ethical code and standards individually but also consider how to engage an organization in ethical practices for counseling, training, and education, especially when addressing needs for DEIA. Counselors and counselor

educators also follow the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards (2023) as a model for ethical decision-making and professional identity. In referencing the CACREP standards and existing literature (Harrichand et al., 2021; Peters & Vereen, 2020; Peters et al. 2020), I can consider what ethical leadership looks like through the lens of both the TL model, SJCRCL model, ACA (2014), and CACREP (2023).

Commitment to DEIA

My vision for leadership and advocacy within the profession considers intersection of ethical leadership, social justice, and DEIA within counselor education through these models and standards, and hope to lead with commitment, integrity, humility and respect, and equity. As GSR, I plan to advocate for the systemic inequities graduate students continue to face, uplift the experiences and scholarship of historically minoritized individuals and groups in our field, address the challenges international students and graduates face, and be responsive to current graduate student needs. I want to encourage graduate students to discuss social justice, equity, and criticality in our experiences and our goals within the field. I hope to be an approachable and collaborative student representative, who can help students engage fully with opportunities with the ACES communities and the profession.

Mikayla Harris

Mikayla Harris is a doctoral student in Counselor Education and Supervision at the University of NV – Las Vegas.

Harris Candidate Statement:

As I have grown through my experiences as a graduate student, mentor, and student leader, I have come to value the relationships and opportunities that help students feel connected to the counseling profession. Serving as the ACES Graduate Student Representative would allow me to help create and strengthen those opportunities for other graduate students. As a current Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral student, I am developing my professional identity as a counselor educator, supervisor, researcher, and leader. I see this position as an opportunity to listen to graduate students, represent their perspectives, and support their professional development and sense of belonging within ACES.

One of my primary goals as Graduate Student Representative would be to improve communication about existing ACES resources and opportunities. ACES provides graduate students with a range of resources related to professional development, leadership, research, and involvement, and I would work to make these offerings more visible and accessible by making them easier for students to find and engage with. I would also seek to strengthen connections among graduate students across ACES

regions by creating opportunities for inter-regional networking and collaboration. Connecting with peers outside of one's own program and region can provide opportunities to share experiences, build professional relationships, and learn from the different perspectives represented within counselor education. I would be interested in creating spaces where graduate students can connect around shared interests, research, professional goals, or experiences in counselor education. As Chair of the Graduate Student Committee, I would work collaboratively with committee members to identify ways to support these goals and respond to the needs of graduate student members. Together, these goals align with ACES's focus on graduate student inclusion and resources while creating more meaningful ways for graduate students to engage with the organization and one another.

My leadership style is collaborative, approachable, and student-centered. I have held leadership positions throughout my life, which have given me opportunities to develop my communication, organization, collaboration, and problem-solving skills while learning how to work with people with different experiences and perspectives. Most recently, my leadership experiences within the Omega Alpha chapter of Chi Sigma Iota have helped shape the way I approach leadership within the counseling profession. As Vice President and President of the chapter, I have had the opportunity to shape our mentorship program while learning how important it is to create structure that still responds to the needs of individual students. I have also facilitated professional development opportunities, strengthened connections among chapter members, and collaborated with faculty and student leaders. Serving as both a mentor and mentee within the mentorship program has given me a unique perspective on the needs of students at different stages of their professional development. Being able to experience the program from both perspectives has reinforced for me that students may need different types of support depending on where they are in their academic and professional development. These experiences have taught me that effective leadership requires flexibility, communication, follow-through, and a willingness to incorporate feedback.

My clinical, academic, and research experiences have also prepared me for the responsibilities of this role. As a counselor, I have developed skills in communication, relationship-building, advocacy, and working with individuals from diverse backgrounds. As a doctoral student, I am developing skills in research, teaching, supervision, and counselor education that I hope to use in service of the profession. My research interests in

Asian American adoptees have further strengthened my interest in identity, belonging, systemic barriers, and the ways counseling professionals can better respond to the experiences of marginalized communities. These interests have encouraged me to consider how counselor education can prepare students to recognize the influence of culture, identity, and systems on clients' experiences. Together, these experiences have

prepared me to communicate across different perspectives, collaborate with students and professionals, and approach leadership with curiosity and intentionality.

My commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism is central to the way I approach counseling, leadership, and counselor education. My clinical experiences have reinforced the importance of culturally responsive and trauma-informed practice, particularly when working with individuals whose identities or life experiences may influence their access to or experiences with mental health services. My academic and research interests have also encouraged me to examine how identity, systems, and social contexts influence individuals' experiences, particularly through my interest in Asian American adoptees and questions related to identity, belonging, and systemic barriers. Through CSI, I have worked to create spaces where students can build community, access mentorship, and feel encouraged to participate. These experiences have reinforced my belief that inclusion involves more than creating opportunities to participate. It also requires listening to different experiences, recognizing barriers to involvement, and being willing to make changes in response to what students share. As Graduate Student Representative, I would continue to support ACES's commitment to graduate student inclusion, diversity, social justice, advocacy, and anti-racism by ensuring that graduate student perspectives are included in conversations about the organization and its future.

I would approach this position with a commitment to listening, collaboration, and action. I want graduate students to feel that their experiences and perspectives are valued and that there are meaningful ways for them to participate in ACES. Through this role, I hope to help strengthen connections among graduate students, increase awareness of opportunities within ACES, and contribute to a graduate student community where students feel supported and connected to the profession. I would be proud to serve ACES in this role while continuing to grow as a counselor educator and leader within the profession.