Kervins Clement

It is with great honor to be nominated to run for a prestigious position, such as the ACA Student Governing Council Representative. I remember when I first joined ACA as a first-year master student. I was excited about the endless opportunities that ACA had to offer. I also felt overwhelmed by its vastness. I struggled to find a home where I felt connected. During ACA 2018 Conference and Expo, I found IAAOC. The leadership made me feel welcomed, loved, and supported. My journey in ACA leadership began that year. After spending a year of volunteering and helping anywhere I can, I was nominated to be the Graduate Representative of IAAOC. I accepted the nomination not because of the title but simply to create the same experience I had. I wanted to help other graduate students find a home. Over the last three years, we have seen an increase in graduate student engagement. I started a graduate committee where graduates students can connect with each other.

In 2022, I decided to pass on the torch to two other passionate graduate students. They will continue to create the space and community that our graduate students in IAAOC need. I am now serving as the Newsletter Editor for IAAOC. I accepted that position because I want to create more opportunities for graduate students to get citations to help with their future careers. Throughout my time in ACA, my vision has been to create space for graduate students to engage in whatever way fits for them.

I share my story with you because that is what I bring to the ACA Student Governing Council Representative position. I have served in countless of leadership positions at the university and community level. Thank you for considering me for 2023–2025 ACA Student Governing Council Representative.

Torsten A. Dryden

The advancement of our profession is of the utmost importance to the future of counseling and the work we do with our clients on a global scale. This begins with students who are working towards positions of advocacy and leadership while still pursuing their own graduate degrees. Therefore, I am running for this position to represent the voices of students to work collaboratively with the governing council of the American Counseling Association (ACA) as our profession continues to demonstrate and pursue excellence. Essentially, students are the future of the ACA.

My qualifications for this position include an array of leadership experience in the field of counseling and beyond. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor in private practice currently serving as the Chapter V President of the Alabama Counseling Association and also a second year counselor education and supervision doctoral student at the University of the Cumberlands. Additionally, I am serving Jacksonville State University as
an adjunct instructor, internist, and President of the Chi Theta Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Academic & Professional Honor Society International.

My community roots in professional leadership began in 2015 whilst serving as the Founder & Executive Director of The Choice: A Mental Health Initiative; a domestic nonprofit organization founded on the principles of advocacy for equity and access to mental healthcare for all people. I have also served in leadership positions in The Justice and Civil Rights Initiative, Sigma Nu Fraternity, Psi Chi National Honor Society in Psychology, and the Student Government Association.

Conclusively, I am passionate about the advancement of the counseling profession and advocating for all of those who inhabit it. Students are the future of the ACA. I would love to collaborate with other leaders in the ACA to assist in shaping the future of Professional Counselors worldwide.

Renee Haskins

Renee Haskins, NCC, LCPC, is a Ph.D. student in Counseling and Supervision at James Madison University. As a multi-dimensional practitioner-scholar, Renee commits her time to promote the counseling profession through scholarship, research, and service.

She serves as an adjunct faculty in the department of Graduate Psychology at James Madison. She also serves as a middle school counselor who is deeply committed to all students’ emotional, social, and psychological growth. She bridges the gap between students’ potential and success through restorative practices, social-emotional learning, and psychosocial support. As a Licensed Professional Counselor, Renee emphasizes the emotional well-being of her clients through self-exploration. Her current research interests include mindfulness, race-based trauma, and the impact of restorative practices on school communities. She is a staunch advocate for restorative practice strategies, youth mental health services’ understanding of cultural norms, and the de-stigmatization of mental health services amongst minority groups. She strives to serve as ACA Student Governing Council Rep to lend her experiences and skills to advancing the American Counseling Association and the counseling profession at large.

Justin McDonald

It is a great honor to be nominated to serve as the ACA Graduate Student Representative to Governing Council. It is my humble intention to use my passion, skills, and experience to advocate for graduate students in the field of counseling and counselor education and supervision (CES). As a second-year student in the CES doctoral program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, I am acutely aware of the challenges facing graduate students as they seek to develop a robust professional identity and a meaningful connection with professional organizations. I am also cognizant of the notion that graduate students truly are the future of this profession. Today’s master’s students will be venturing out into the world to bring healing to those in need. Current doctoral students will become the next generation of counselor educators. Graduate students at all levels represent the future leaders of our state, regional, and national professional organizations. Clearly, there is a strong need to advocate for graduate students and give them a voice in the decisions that will shape this profession in the future. I am already dedicated heavily to this mission. I am currently serving as the NARACES Graduate Student Representative-Elect, have been chosen as a 2022 NARACES Emerging Leader, and was the recipient of
the Vicki E. Bowman Outstanding Graduate Student Scholarship at the 2022 ASGW Conference. In my own CES program, I am actively involved in the leadership of a peer mentoring program designed to provide formative relationships to help newer students thrive. Lastly, I have over 15 years of professional clinical practice and leadership experience that gives me a vital perspective on the diverse needs of graduate students as they enter the profession. If elected, I will work diligently to represent graduate students’ interests within the ACA.

Kristal Miller

I am Kristal Miller, a doctoral candidate at Kean University, pursuing a degree in Counseling and Supervision. I would like to be your next Graduate Student Representative to the Governing Council of the American Counseling Association (ACA). As a graduate student, I have had the opportunity to serve in various roles in several organizations, which has enhanced my leadership skills and allowed me to advocate for issues and concerns of interest to graduate students. I have served as president of Kappa Upsilon Nu Chapter, Chi Sigma Iota Honor Society International (CSI), I am a member of Kean University’s Counselor Education Department Retention & Tenure Committee, the Chair of the Bylaw s and Policy & Procedure Review Committee for the International Association of Resilience & Trauma Counseling (IARTC), the newest division of ACA. I am also a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians; and I was recently selected for the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Diversity’s (AMCD) Mentoring Program and participated in their Writers’ Consortium. With my experience as a counseling professional and graduate student, I am in a unique position that allows me to be attuned to issues and concerns of current students and understand the future impact of these concerns as a licensed professional.

If elected, I will:

1. Advocate for increased involvement of graduate students in all divisions through mentorships and other educational endeavors.
2. Advocate for scholarship and grant opportunities to sponsor graduate students’ involvement in the various divisions, educational programs, and conferences.
3. Represent the interest of graduate students in ACA, the divisions, and the profession.
4. Create a platform to disseminate information of interest to graduate students in a timely and efficient manner.
5. Raise consciousness as it relates to BIPOC and social justice concerns.
6. Promote excellence in Counseling and Counselor Education.

Illiana Navarra

“Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and test of our civilization.”
– Mahatma Gandhi

As a recent master’s Graduate and current 1st-year Doctoral student, I embraced my drive to promote diversity, inclusion, and advocacy for people of color and marginalized communities. Having a biracial and multicultural identity, I understand the importance of representation in the profession and leadership. I have devoted my short and optimistic
career as a counselor by pushing myself to be the representation I wish to see within the counseling profession that I love so much. During my presidency for Bowling Green State University’s Chi Sigma Iota Chapter, I focused on counselor growth that encouraged members to grow professionally and as advocates. Being the Graduate Student Representative for the Association of Child and Adolescent Counseling, I have advocated for new professionals and graduate students. Being the liaison to provide resources and support to our growing professionals has been a privilege. I hope that as ACA Student Governing Council Representative, I can continue my initiative to advocate for new counselors and graduate students.

ACA continues to foster an environment of diversity and inclusion that allows new counselors, like myself, to have the ability to dream and pursue positions that, at a point, I thought I could never fill. I hope that being elected will allow me to continue utilizing my drive and passion so that I can be a strong underrepresented voice as a beacon to those trying to navigate this profession during such a tumultuous time.