

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Crys Latham for Delegate

For the past nine years, I have served as the founding Director of College Counseling at Washington Latin Public Charter School in Washington, D.C. I graduated from Mount Holyoke College as a first-generation college student whose family was low-income and homeless off-and-on throughout my childhood and college years. It seemed like destiny that I would end up at such an amazing college, and like many of us in this field, I unknowingly began my career in college admissions and college counseling while in college, first as an overnight host and then sitting on advisory boards and coordinating overnight visits for prospective students. The difficulties I faced in finding the best college option for my family and me and then navigating a college world completely foreign to me fueled my desire to assist students and families in finding a pathway to college and to avoid some of the same obstacles my family and I encountered in my journey.

I spent a decade in selective and highly selective admissions before I was hired to serve as Latin's first college counselor and to create the college counseling program in 2010. The heart of my work at Latin and its racially and socio-economically diverse community is student-centered and mission-driven, as I partner with each family, focused on their needs and hopes for their student. Whether that work is seeking out summer enrichment programs, determining an appropriate non-college post-secondary plan, or building college lists or lists of dozens of scholarships for each student for which they are eligible, the attention is placed on getting the students in a position to be successful in their individual post-secondary process.

As an active member of PCACAC and its Membership & Outreach and Professional Development committees, I continue to seek opportunities that will connect both members and non-members alike in our region to the resources of the association and look to build a more inclusive environment for underrepresented areas, schools, and counselors. I understand the importance of the work we do in college counseling and admissions, and had I not landed at the right college for me, my life would have taken a very different trajectory. I would not be in the position I am today to offer to serve you as a delegate for PCACAC. With the support and encouragement of many members in our association, I have found ways to contribute and assist through committee work and initiatives, such as with PCACAC's first pre-conference Equity Collaborative. We have come to a time in our field when things are being questioned and changing more quickly than ever, whether it is technology, policies and practices, and even the legality of what we do in an effort to create post-secondary communities that allow for us to grow young people who will launch themselves into the world and become engaged citizens. As a delegate, I wish to lend my experience and perspective to the PCACAC board as a member of the D.C. and charter school communities, engage you in conversation to learn about your interests and concerns, and serve as your voice to NACAC, voting on issues that will allow our work to continue to be productive and meaningful. I hope you will elect me as one of your delegates to serve you with the passion and drive I hold for the work we do every day in our individual communities and as a collective body.