

Jay E. Darr, Ph.D., LPC, NCC, PMP  
ACCA Candidate Statement



Being selected as a candidate for ACCA President-Elect is an honor. I'm running to ensure all members have a voice in the development of innovative solutions to meet student needs within the context of inclusion, social justice, and higher education challenges.

My unlikely journey as a candidate started in southwestern Pennsylvania, where commitment to family and community were instilled. I learned early on that speaking about or seeking assistance for "mental problems wasn't for us or what we do." Stigmatization of mental health and help-seeking continued to grow even in the face of significant academic and interpersonal struggles while completing degrees at West Virginia University and serving in the military. Engaging in campus and community activities gave voice to my feelings and incrementally changed how I viewed self, others, and

help-seeking. These experiences cultivated an internal call to the counseling profession and earning additional degrees from Duquesne University in Counselor Education and Supervision.

I have had the privilege to serve as a Licensed Professional Counselor for over 15 years in community-based, insurance, and higher education settings. Through progressive leadership roles and as a Project Management Professional (PMP), I was able to enhance policies, programs, and services. Accomplishments in my current position at the University of North Texas' (UNT) Counseling and Testing Services illustrates a deep understanding of political and social structures of institutions of higher education. Accomplishments include:

- Led business improvement process to enhance care for student-athletes
- Implemented and manage ongoing operations of a telebehavioral health platform
- Facilitated partnerships among university units to secure grant funding
- Partnered with Academic Success, Veterans Services, and student organizations to enhance retention, graduation rates, and resilience by engaging students at various campus and community locations to have "courageous conversations" in a safe and supportive space
- Completed the 2017 NAPSA-Region III/SACSA Mid-Managers Institute
- ACCA 2018 Counselor of the Year
- Serve as Co-Chair for the ACCA Supervision and Training Committee
- Member of ACCA Diversity and Inclusion Committee

UNT and other institutions, regardless of size or type, are exploring approaches (e.g., stepped, triage/stratified care, integrated models, etc.) to meet increased demand and limited community resources. My experiences in the military, corporate, and higher education settings provide a unique skill set to lead ACCA on a data-driven and evidence-based path of innovation that addresses challenges and opportunities in college counseling.

I am committed to working closely with members and strengthening organizational partnerships to exchange and apply knowledge. An essential aspect of our work will include seeking member input on:

- Enhancing the member experience to retain and grow our membership
- Being an engaged thought partner to address the changing landscape of college counseling
- Enriching participation in policy and social justice advocacy

I'm asking for your vote to innovate ACCA and college counseling.  
Let's make it happen together!