

## Board of Directors – Candidate Statement

**Candidate Name:** Blake Winchell

**Organization:** Louisiana State University



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### Why are you interested in serving on the SoACE Board of Directors?

I am interested in serving on the SoACE Board because I feel prepared to take on an advanced leadership role and want to serve the organization that has significantly contributed to my professional development. I value the immense contribution SoACE makes to its members and am driven by a desire to contribute to the organization's legacy. I am specifically interested in the Director of Finance role as I see this as an exciting opportunity to formally utilize my experience and skillsets to ensure the association's continued financial strength. My interest is rooted in a commitment to financial stewardship and sustainability. My goal is to ensure the association remains on a strong, transparent, and sustainable financial path for years to come. My past leadership roles have instilled an appreciation for putting every dollar to good use to effectively grow and serve the organization. Ultimately, my candidacy is driven by a combination of gratitude for the SoACE community and a readiness to apply proven financial leadership to support its mission and goals. I would not be the professional I am today if I had not been welcomed into the SoACE community years ago. SoACE adds so much value to our members and a return to being formally involved is an exciting opportunity. It would be an honor to utilize my experience and skillsets to ensure our association remains on a strong, transparent, and sustainable financial path for years to come.

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### What qualifications or experiences make you a strong fit for this board position?

I believe that I possess a wealth of relevant experience and leadership qualifications that make me a strong fit for the Director of Finance role. Foremost among these is my hands-on financial management experience I gained serving multiple Executive Board roles within LACE. Through these positions, I gained firsthand experience navigating the complexities of managing a state association's finances, focusing on effective resource allocation to grow the organization and enhance member services. My previous leadership within LACE closely mirrors the financial stewardship required of the SoACE Director of Finance. Beyond financial roles, my overall leadership is extensive, spanning professional organizations and non-profit community work. Within SoACE, I have served as a formal and informal leader, including chairing the State Association & Consortia Committee and volunteering as a LEAD and conference mentor. This internal experience has taught me how to connect people and

resources to achieve a common goal, a crucial skill for ensuring alignment between financial decisions and organizational strategy. Furthermore, I have experience leading multiple non-profit boards in Baton Rouge and I currently serve as the LSU Delta Chi Alumni Board President. These diverse roles demonstrate a proven ability to provide general financial oversight, collaborate effectively, and add value to the experiences of others. It is with all this in mind that I ask for your vote of confidence in my candidacy for the role of Director of Finance.

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### **SoACE Membership & Leadership Involvement**

#### **Involvement and/or leadership roles (SoACE and/or similar organizations):**

I have been an active member of SoACE for most of my 18 years in the career services field. I've had the honor of serving in key leadership positions across a variety of organizations. As an Executive Board member for LACE (Louisiana Association of Colleges and Employers) serving as Treasurer, President-Elect, and President, I learned how to navigate the complexities of managing a state association's finances. My service in LACE led to more formal involvement within SoACE as a member of the State Association & Consortia Committee, subsequently chairing the committee. After finishing my term as Chair, I served in leadership roles on both the Counseling & Advising Knowledge Group and Conference Committee. I also volunteer as a SoACE LEAD and conference mentor. Outside of our profession, I find fulfillment in using my skills to build community. In my work as Alumni Board President for the LSU Chapter of the Delta Chi Fraternity, I provide general oversight to the student organization that shaped my collegiate experience, helping the young men to continue the long tradition of Delta Chi at LSU. I've also had the privilege of leading multiple non-profit boards in Baton Rouge, taking joy from working with a team to add value to the experiences of others.