

Board of Directors – Candidate Statement

Candidate Name: Oliver Blanco

Organization: University of Houston, C.T. Bauer College of Business



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

The Director of Access and Community Development Board position at SoACE interests me as it aligns with my commitment to strengthening connections between employers, institutions, and our diverse communities that are part of this association. Currently, as the Assistant Director of Employer Relations at the Bauer College of Business, I have seen how intentional outreach, inclusive recruiting practices, and collaborative partnerships have allowed pathways for many of our first-generation and underrepresented students. I have expanded our business students' networks across several industries, including banking, finance, insurance, accounting, and technology, among others. Supporting engaged employers by connecting them with BBA, MBA, and MS talent and guiding them has been my pleasure for the past five years. SoACE is an inclusive association that values belonging, access to opportunities, and creating a safe space for learning from one another. Serving in this role would give me the opportunity to grow professionally and contribute at a regional level. Our culture of inclusion would allow me to bring my relationship-building skills, equity-minded leadership, and strategic approach to the SoACE community. I would be honored to help advance meaningful, community-focused progress across our association.

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

My commitment to access and equity has shaped my professional work, with daily routines that involve supporting employers not only with recruitment logistics but also guiding them in inclusive practices. This helps employers reach our diverse student populations to build more equitable hiring pipelines. I have supported LGBTQIA+ nonprofit initiatives, community-based arts programs, and university engagement strategies that prioritize belonging, representation, and inclusivity. I am also intentional about uplifting students who traditional recruitment models have historically overlooked, and I advocate for stronger inclusive structures and practices that remove barriers to expand opportunities. Whether collaborating with faculty, coaching employers, or designing recruitment strategies for new partners, I strive to work with equity and transparency to achieve a positive community impact.

SoACE Membership & Leadership Involvement

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

When I first entered higher education in 2007, I was encouraged to attend the SoACE conference in 2008. It was my first opportunity to interact with colleagues in the same profession from whom I could learn and benefit. With the support of our career center, I was able to grow, attend, and volunteer at several other conferences, including those hosted by SoACE, NACE, and CSEA (formerly MBACSEA). Most recently, I had the opportunity to serve on the New Member Committee for SoACE from 2021 to 2024.