

Board of Directors – Candidate Statement

Candidate Name: Tracy Austin

Organization: Clemson University



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

SoACE members have enriched my professional journey through insightful mentoring, enthusiastically sharing resources, and providing opportunities to practice. This model of leadership transformed my approach into one that is rooted in mission impact and intentionally flexible to fuel a collective power. We are truly a special community driven by a strong commitment to collaborative learning and equipping others. As we approach our 20th year, SoACE is uniquely positioned to lead the way in serving as a voice for industry leaders and higher education institutions. Given the opportunity to serve as President-Elect, I would advocate to:

- Elevate the employer perspective to increase opportunities for contributing to a future-ready workforce.
- Empower strategic and innovative programming through authentic partnerships.
- Champion the contributions of an engaged membership to articulate the value and impact of our work.

SoACE has a rich history of developing leaders who enable others, reduce barriers to opportunity, and foster the exchange of knowledge. It would be my honor to give back to the membership and extend this legacy as we work together to position the association as a beacon of leadership for the next 20 years.

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

My experience directing large-scale initiatives, leading high-performing teams, and serving in various roles within SoACE makes me a strong candidate for President-Elect. My unique skill set blends analytical and interpersonal skills, making me well-suited to lead the association into our 20th year of service. At Clemson University, I lead our nationally recognized core competency initiative, oversee experiential learning courses and programs, and direct the Center's assessment efforts. I have served as a keynote speaker for faculty and staff sessions at multiple universities, as well as a breakout speaker at multiple professional development events. Within SoACE, I served on the leadership team for the Assessment and Data Analytics Knowledge Group, including as Chair in 2022. In my current

role as the Director of Finance and Chair of the Finance Committee, I present monthly financial updates, provide critical guidance on the impact of strategic initiatives, and oversee the budget request process. This work exemplifies my ability to simplify complex concepts, allowing for more strategic work. Additionally, I was a member of the 2023 NACE Management Leadership Institute and a member of the NACE Career Readiness Task Force from 2022 to 2023. I served on multiple accreditation review committees for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Previously, I worked as the QEP Director at Anderson University (SC), overseeing a career readiness initiative. I earned a Master of Education, Counselor Education - School Counseling from Clemson University in 2008 and have begun work in Clemson's Educational Leadership, Ph.D. program.

SoACE Membership & Leadership Involvement

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

Throughout my career, I have approached my work through the lens of generating collaborative learning experiences that help propel others to grow and communicate their value. SoACE provides many opportunities to do just that. Since joining in 2019, I served the Assessment and Data Analytics Knowledge Group Leadership Team in various capacities, including Program Coordinator, Assistant Chair, Chair, and Past Chair. At the 2022 and 2025 Annual Conferences, I facilitated roundtable discussions and presented in breakout sessions. In my current role as Director of Finance, I utilize my background in teaching and assessment to synthesize longitudinal financial reports, make thoughtful and informed recommendations, and establish efficient systems in collaboration with SoACE's association management company. During my time on the Board, I have built partnerships with each Director that have helped the association prioritize intentional service while maintaining a healthy financial outlook. I also led the Board in strategic planning sessions designed to prompt reflection and reduce barriers to action. As a member of the 2022-23 NACE Career Readiness Task Force, I researched emerging trends and needs for implementing career readiness initiatives by analyzing four years of QEP Executive Summaries. Since 2023, I have served as a peer reviewer for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Over the course of reviewing almost 15 private and public institutions, I established consensus among the team and served as a consultant for institutional representatives. This service demonstrates my commitment to supporting colleagues to deepen our collaborative impact.