



Aesha L. Uqdah, PsyD, HSP she/her/hers
Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, Student Wellbeing
Director, Counseling Center
University of Louisville

Greetings! I have just begun my 9th year as the director at the University of Louisville's Counseling Center (ULCC) and this semester also marks the beginning of my second year as the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs for Student Wellbeing. While I certainly could not have guessed that I would become the AVP in 2021, clearly, it was time. I have similar feelings about running for President Elect of AUCCCD: I would not have guessed I would be in the running at this point in my career, but it is time.

In my candidate statement when I ran for the board, I said, "I am excited about the opportunity to boldly represent and advocate for counseling centers and directors across a range of issues." I hope I have done that and have made my fellow board members and our larger membership feel good about the work they are doing. Having served on the board since late 2020, I have been able to literally have a seat at the table of the organization that represents and supports us all. I now know first-hand of the hard work and sacrifices board members make, and have gotten to witness the passion behind the work that we all do. It is my hope that by serving as the President of AUCCCD, I can continue to foster the culture of support, thought-provoking discussion, commiseration, and change-making that I have come to rely on from AUCCCD as a counseling center director over the years.

We are all aware that many of our colleagues have chosen to leave or unfortunately, been pushed out of, their positions. Some have retired, some have been promoted or moved on to greener pastures outside of higher ed, some needed to find space to breathe and rediscover their passions. To be sure, the work has changed, the climate has changed, and it sometimes it seems, the rules have changed. This is a time to reflect on those changes and to reconnect to our work and what we truly care about in this field. Of the many changes that the pandemic and multiple worldwide events we have dealt with over the past few years, I am grateful for one outcome: I now feel even more empowered to bring my whole self into every aspect of what I do. That means no more dancing around an issue or stifling my opinion for fear it will not be well-received. That means taking risks and knowing that it will all be fine, even if I don't know what "fine" looks like in the moment. I feel empowered to express my ideas and take the lead to rethink and hopefully improve the way we approach campus mental health and wellbeing in higher education. I would be honored to be able to bring that energy to AUCCCD as its next President-Elect.