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As I prepared to write this statement of interest to be President of AUCCCD, I went back and read the first line of statement I wrote when I was running for a position on the Board - I couldn't imagine wanting to work anywhere but in college counseling centers. As I read it I found it to be as true today as it was when I first wrote it over three years ago. I love being a college counseling center director as much or maybe more than I did when I started.

That's not to say that things haven't changed over my eleven years as a director. I remember at my first conference hearing directors talk about the 'new normal' they were finding themselves in. There had been a few years of noticing an increase in symptom severity and need for mental health treatment by the students seeking services. At my first AUCCCD Conference it was clear that our profession was realizing, I'm sure not for the first time, that significant change had come and there was no going back.

The span of my directorship, and membership in this organization, has brought many changes to AUCCCD. Our organization continues to grow. One of the blessings of this growth is that we now find ourselves in a much more diverse organization. We have more directors from community colleges than ever before, along with directors from other types of institutions along with traditional four year colleges/universities. There is much more discipline diversity among our members with more Master's degree directors and directors from other professional disciplines. This has helped us to rightly have to redefine the question: "Who is a college counseling center director?" Similarly, we have a much higher proportion of new directors who haven't previously had experience working in college mental health.

Many of our roles have also expanded over time. Many of you are like me, who started out as the Director of Counseling Services and campus Chief Mental Health Officer, only to have my position expand first to Director of Counseling & Accessibility Services, then later to Assistant Dean of Campus Wellness. I'm not the only director who has seen their administrative responsibilities widen as we are recognized for our ability to have significant, positive impacts on our campuses well beyond our counseling center doors.

Another significant evolution during my time as a Director has been the more diverse ways we now define what it means to be an effective college counseling center and the approaches each

of us take in realizing that on our campus. We are utilizing different models to effectively respond to the increase in demand and need from our campus communities. Thankfully, the profession of college counseling has also made significant strides in changing how we define what clinical loads and work balance should look like. That's not to say that our work loads are balanced - far from it. The last few years have brought so many additional challenges to our work. Increased demand, both from students and upper administration to provide more of different care to our campuses.

Institutions sometimes making impulsive decisions about ways to change, add, or augment campus services without consulting professionals like us who understand the larger impact of those decisions - or who will have to implement them. The mass exodus in higher education employment, which has made it much more difficult to staff our centers, and our director seats.

I know that I've not touched on all the changes and challenges that have occurred in the last decade of our profession and organization, but this seems to be a good start. I've been asked more than once recently how, given all the ways our job has gotten harder, I can still say that I can't imagine wanting to work anywhere else than in college counseling centers. Simply, I still love being able to have a positive impact in the lives of students. Helping students to persist toward graduation with better skills to go out and be the people they want to be in the world is still so rewarding for me and is at the core of why I've always done this work.

Additionally, I have hope for our future. I think that we as an organization, at this moment in time, are in the position to have a significant impact on where college mental health goes moving forward. The work of our organization over the past several years, including the addition of our Executive Director, is continuing to position us as the leading voice for collegiate mental health.

When I think about the future of AUCCCD, we need to continue our work to find ways of supporting our membership in more meaningful ways, while also working outside our organization to facilitate awareness and change, leading the way on collegiate mental health across our campuses. I want to see us continue to find more consistent meaningful support for directors at all levels of development, beyond the list-serve and our wonderful annual conference.

As we look outside our organization, we need to find more ways to increase our visibility in other areas of higher education, especially with upper administration, and further solidify our role as the leading experts on college mental health. Our ability to lobby and advocate for legislation will continue to grow as well.

The suggestions for moving forward aren't of my creation - they are yours - our members. Your Board has listened and is currently developing a new strategic plan to take us into our future, focusing on all the challenges above and more.

I love working in college counseling centers and it's college counseling centers that have had the biggest impact in forming me into the clinician that I am today. I've been privileged to have been selected by you to serve on the Board of AUCCCD and have greatly enjoyed my work with

the Research, Inclusive Excellence and Equity, and Director Development Committees. I would be honored to have the opportunity to lead this great organization as we continue to strive for excellence in our work and field.

Thank you so much for your consideration.