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Greetings Colleagues!

I am pleased to run for the Board of the most committed, helpful, centered, and generous professional organization I know of, AUCCCD. My name is Serena Butler-Johnson, and I am the Director of the Counseling and Wellness Center at the University of the District of Columbia, where I have served for 16 years. I love being a Counseling Center Director and AUCCCD has been instrumental to my development as a professional. When I am asked about what I do for work, sharing that I am a therapist or a Psychologist does not even scratch the surface in terms of describing my professional identity or the reality of what I do. As a Counseling Center Director, I feel incredibly grateful for the opportunity to serve as a leader in developing and delivering quality care and vital mental health services and programs to students during a critical time in their lives. At my first conference, I recall a conversation near a coffee bar about the unique nature of our work as college counseling center Directors. The words that Sharon McNulty, a wise long-time Director, stated, “It’s a calling” resonated deeply with me, then and now. The passion for the work and the commitment to the mental health of college students is what has led me to running for a seat on the Board.

Prior to sharing my aspirations for Board membership, I will share a bit about the context of my Directorship for over the past decade and a half. UDC is the only public university in the nation’s capital, an HBCU, and the only urban land-grant university in the United States educating a mixture of traditional and non-traditional college students with a large commuter population. We offer several pathways to educational attainment, ranging from workforce development and vocational training, community college, 4-year degrees, graduate programs, and law school. The core values of UDC align very much with my own, which center around social justice, service, equity, and supporting underprivileged folks on their journeys to better themselves. I am truly passionate about helping students by providing accessible mental health care that is often critical to their wellbeing, matriculation, and ability to maximize their potential. Currently, I see reducing barriers to students’ care and improving their access to valuable services, programs, and resources as the most important priorities I have as a Director.

As a Board member, I would bring perspectives from a variety of standpoints such as Director from an HBCU, an urban campus, medium and small size universities, commuter school with

non-traditional students, university system with a community college, and public institution. I have also served as an Assistant Vice President of Student Wellness, managing Health and Disability Services for a couple years before deciding to return to my true passion of the counseling center Director role. If I were granted the opportunity to influence the work of the Board and AUCCCD, I would likely champion efforts to reach students from underserved populations and first-generation college students. I am also interested in work and training that explores approaches to decolonizing mental health treatment and how that can be manifested in individual, group, and systemic work in counseling centers and universities. Finally, I see our administrative assistants as the glue to keeping our systems together, serving as a critical lifeline needed for our offices to operate smoothly. Thus, I am interested in further exploring how AUCCCD and its members can further support our administrative personnel, perhaps by arranging opportunities for peer consultation and professional development. AUCCCD is an incredible organization with such an important and far-reaching scope of impact that has been invaluable to me in my development and field of collegiate mental health. I would welcome the opportunity to give back and advance the work through service on the Board.

P.S. I was born and raised in Connecticut. My ethnic origins include Nigeria, Cameroon, Congo, and Western Bantu Peoples, England and Northwestern Europe, Scotland, Benin & Togo, Mali, Senegal, and Ireland. I need to learn more about all these countries. I am a proud alum of Emory University (undergraduate) and The George Washington University (graduate school). In my spare time, I am usually cheering on my nine-year old son as he plays travel basketball and baseball, as well as rec soccer...of course as his #1 fan! I love music and dancing, and I enjoy shopping and dining out.