



## 2026-2027 Board Slate

### Co-Vice Presidents



**Adam Bear**, Assistant Director, Stewardship for the Office of Corporate Relations, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

I currently serve as the Assistant Director, Stewardship for the Office of Corporate Relations at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). In this capacity, I am the stewardship lead for the OCR team, managing the corporate experience to ensure high-quality interactions, maintaining key relationships through annual reports to major partners, and coordinating the annual funding process for many major corporate partners. Prior to joining the OCR, I was the scheduling and travel coordinator for the UIUC Chancellor for close to a decade. I hold a B.A. from Eastern Illinois University and a certificate in Project Management that has informed and enhanced much of the work I do for OCR and NACRO.

I became a member of NACRO in 2019, first attending Conference and Bootcamp in Pittsburgh. Since that time, I have served as Chair of the Communications Committee (23-24) and Chair-elect and Chair of the Professional Education Committee (24-25, 25-26). I've additionally served as a member of the Strategic Planning & Implementation Committees (22-23, 23-24, 25-26) as well as the Professional Education Transition and Software Ecosystem working groups. A highlight of my time in NACRO has been working with my exceptional Professional Education co-chairs to reimagine and strengthen the structure of the PE Committee, while also deepening our talent & leadership pipeline with the implementation of subcommittee leads and co-leads. I was also honored to receive NACRO's Rising Star Award (22-23) in recognition of my leadership and implementation of the Whova conference app platform.

I am interested in election to the role of co-Vice President because it feels like a great use of my experience in leading two of NACRO's four standing committees. NACRO has provided me with countless opportunities for leadership experience and personal & professional growth, so, for me, this is a wonderful way to give back and contribute my time, effort, and knowledge to NACRO.



**Christine Roth**, Executive Director, U.S. Hazelnut Industry Organization

Currently, I serve as Executive Director of the U.S. Hazelnut Industry Organization, representing four interconnected industry entities: the Hazelnut Marketing Board, Oregon Hazelnut Commission, the Nut Growers Society of Oregon, Washington & British Columbia, and Associated Oregon Hazelnut Industries. In this role, I work closely with growers, processors, corporate partners, and policymakers to advance one of the fastest growing specialty crop industries in North America. My work sits at the intersection of industry partnerships, strategic planning, and organizational leadership.

My professional career spans more than 30 years in corporate development, industry relations, and strategic partnership work across the United States and Europe. Earlier in my career, I held leadership roles in investment and financial services and worked extensively in corporate communications and business development before moving into senior leadership roles in the food and agriculture sector. I later served at Oregon State University's College of Business as Assistant Director of Advancement, leading all corporate and industry relations. Having worked on both the university and industry sides of these partnerships, I bring a very practical perspective on how institutions and companies build meaningful collaborations. I also serve on the Honors College Board at the University of Alabama.

In addition to my current role in industry, I continue to consult with several universities on corporate relations and industry engagement strategies, helping institutions strengthen their external partnerships and align their work more effectively with industry needs.

My journey with NACRO began nearly seven years ago as a member who was immediately struck by the openness and generosity of this community. NACRO is one of the few professional organizations where colleagues share candidly about what is working—and what is not—and how we can all do our jobs better. That culture of trust and practical exchange is what makes NACRO so valuable.

Over time I became more involved in volunteer leadership. I lead NACRO's Western Regional Meet-Up group, which has become an important way for colleagues to stay connected between conferences and continue sharing ideas and challenges in real time. These regional gatherings reinforce one of NACRO's greatest strengths: relationships that extend far beyond the annual meeting.

I served as the conference recruitment lead for the 2023 NACRO Conference in Portland, where our team conducted targeted outreach across the western United States, significantly expanding regional participation. The conference ultimately became the highest-attended NACRO conference to date. That experience reinforced for me how powerful peer-to-peer engagement can be in growing this community.

For the past two years, I have served as Co-Chair of the NACRO Membership Committee. In this role, I have worked with an exceptional group of volunteers to focus on three core priorities: recruiting new members, retaining and engaging current members, and reconnecting with colleagues whose memberships have lapsed. One of the most important efforts during this time has been developing a structured membership engagement strategy designed to strengthen NACRO's long-term growth. This includes the recruitment framework we are now using to support attendance and participation for the 2026 NACRO Conference in Salt Lake City, as well as building a more intentional approach to regional outreach and member engagement.

In addition, I served on the Membership Database Working Group, helping evaluate and implement a new association system that will allow NACRO to better understand member engagement, improve recruitment and retention strategies, and support the full lifecycle of member involvement in the organization. As NACRO grows, having the right infrastructure to support that growth is critical.

Volunteerism has always been at the heart of NACRO's success. The organization runs on the energy, creativity, and commitment of its members, and I believe strongly in contributing time and effort to strengthen the professional community that has given so much to all of us. Whether through membership outreach, conference recruitment, regional engagement, or strategic planning, I see this work as an investment in the longterm vitality of NACRO.

What continues to inspire me about NACRO is that it is not simply a professional association—it is a trusted network. It is where we benchmark ideas, share strategies, and support one another in a field that continues to evolve quickly. The connections formed here help all of us be more effective in our institutions and organizations.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside so many thoughtful colleagues and remain deeply committed to helping NACRO continue to grow as the premier professional community for those working in corporate and industry relations.

## **Benchmarking Co-Chair**



**Anthony Llano**, *Director, Industry Partnerships & Project-Based Learning*, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, University of Georgia

I am honored to be considered for the role of Co-Chair of NACRO's Benchmarking Committee. NACRO has played an important role in advancing the academic-corporate relations profession, and I am energized by the opportunity to contribute more deeply to a community that is shaping how institutions and industry collaborate for mutual impact.

My career has been centered on building, scaling, and sustaining complex external partnerships across industry, academia, and nonprofit ecosystems. During my tenure at JohnDeere, I led global university relations initiatives and business development efforts that connected corporate strategy with academic innovation. In this role, I developed and managed a global network of university partnerships focused on emerging technologies, data analytics, and customer insights while also establishing processes and metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of those collaborations.

These experiences provided me with a strong foundation in benchmarking, data-informed decision-making, and the importance of shared standards in advancing partnership models. I worked closely with cross-sector stakeholders, including universities, startups, venture capital partners, and research consortia, to drive innovation and ensure alignment between institutional capabilities and industry needs. This work directly informs my understanding of NACRO's mission and the critical role that benchmarking plays in defining and elevating best practices across our field.

In my current role at the University of Georgia, I continue to focus on strengthening university-industry engagement through strategic partnerships, operational excellence, and data-driven insights. I have actively contributed to NACRO's Benchmarking Committee, supporting initiatives such as surveys, data collection, and member-driven insights that help inform institutional strategy and demonstrate the value of corporate relations work (see attached e-mail for example of recent data analysis completed regarding UIDP). Through this involvement, I have gained a deeper appreciation for the rigor, collaboration, and member engagement required to deliver meaningful benchmarking resources.

Additionally, my familiarity with organizations such as UIDP, UIC, etc., has further reinforced my commitment to advancing collaboration frameworks that are scalable, transparent, and impactful. I believe NACRO is uniquely positioned to lead in this space by continuing to evolve its benchmarking tools and fostering a culture of shared learning.

If selected as Co-Chair, I would focus on three key priorities:

1. **Enhancing Data Quality and Relevance:** Strengthening benchmarking methodologies to ensure data is actionable, comparable, and aligned with the evolving needs of members.

2. Expanding Member Engagement: Increasing participation in benchmarking initiatives by making processes accessible, valuable, and clearly tied to institutional outcomes.
3. Driving Insight to Action: Translating benchmarking data into practical resources, frameworks, and best practices that members can implement within their organizations.

I am committed to collaborative leadership and believe strongly in NACRO's mission to advance the profession through shared knowledge and partnership. I would welcome the opportunity to serve alongside my colleagues to continue building a robust benchmarking ecosystem that supports our members and strengthens the impact of academic-corporate relations.

### **Communications Committee Co-Chair**



**David Myers**, *Executive Director, Office of Corporate Engagement, Kent State University*

David Myers serves as the Executive Director of the Office of Corporate Engagement at Kent State University, where he leads efforts to coordinate and strengthen the university's partnerships with industry. In this role, he works across colleges, research institutes, and administrative units to align institutional capabilities with corporate needs—advancing collaboration in workforce development, applied research, and innovation.

David transitioned into higher education in 2024, bringing with him a strong background in relationship building, strategic partnerships, and community engagement. Prior to joining Kent State, he served in a variety of leadership roles in the manufacturing industry in Northeast Ohio, where he developed deep experience working with regional employers and understanding the evolving needs of industry.

It was during this transition that his engagement with NACRO became especially influential. Before being offered his current role, NACRO helped shape and sharpen his interest in the field of academic corporate relations, providing both insight and inspiration into the critical role universities play in supporting industry and regional economies.

Since joining Kent State, David has applied that perspective to build a more coordinated and strategic approach to corporate engagement—one that emphasizes long-term relationship development, alignment with institutional priorities, and measurable impact for both the university and its partners.

David has been an active and engaged member of NACRO, valuing the organization's collaborative spirit, practical resources, and commitment to advancing the profession. He credits NACRO with playing

a meaningful role in preparing him for the work he now enjoys and sees the organization as an essential community for learning, connection, and shared progress.

I am honored to be considered for the role of Communications Committee Chair-Elect. NACRO has had a significant impact on my professional journey, particularly as I transitioned into higher education, and I am deeply appreciative of the knowledge, support, and community it provides. I would welcome the opportunity to give back by helping to elevate and communicate the great work happening across NACRO's membership. With humility and enthusiasm, I look forward to the possibility of serving this community and supporting its continued growth and impact.

### **Membership Committee Co-Chair**



**Deidra K. Diaz**, Senior Development Officer for Corporate and Foundation Relations, Samford University

**Deidra K. Diaz serves as the Senior Development Officer for Corporate and Foundation Relations at Samford University** in Birmingham, Alabama, where she leads efforts to cultivate strategic partnerships that advance institutional priorities, student success, and innovation. Prior, **she served as Associate Senior Director of Corporate & Foundation Relations for The University of Alabama**, where they successfully met and exceeded their \$1.8 Billion capital campaign goal a year early. While there, she also served on the Office of Development's

Strategic Plan Committee and worked extensively with the University's Office of Research and Economic Development. With a 20+ year background spanning philanthropy, program/membership development, and relationship management, Deidra brings a strong commitment to aligning corporate engagement strategies with the evolving needs of higher education.

Deidra has extensive Board development and volunteer leadership experience, including a past 2-year elected international volunteer role as DST's Regional Director, where she led membership and strategic programming initiatives for over 22,000 volunteers [and 191 member-based chapters] across the southern US and the Bahamas. Deidra is an active Scout Mom, graduate of Leadership University, Project Corporate Leadership, and Certified Facilitator for *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking when the Stakes are High*. She earned her BA degree in Communication and MA degree in Communication Management

Deidra is an active and committed NACRO volunteer, with **three years of service on the Membership Committee**, where she has supported member recruitment, onboarding, and engagement efforts.

- Since 2023, Deidra has served on the Membership Committee as **Co-Lead for the Southeast Regional Meet-Up**, helping create regionally focused networking and professional development opportunities for NACRO members.
- Deidra has contributed to NACRO’s educational mission by **presenting two workshops**—one at the **2025 Annual Conference “Small Shop, Big Results”** and another through a NACRO **online webinar**—sharing insights and best practices in corporate relations.
- She has been featured in a **NACRO membership video campaign** highlighting the value of attending events and engaging with the community and is a past member of NACRO’s Excellence in Equity subcommittee.
- Deidra is an active participant in NACRO (Portland 2023, Raleigh 2024, Kansas City 2025 Conference Attendee) who also attended **two Midwinter Leadership Meetings** (Atlanta 2024 and Irvine, California 2025)

I am sincerely grateful for this Membership Committee Chair-Elect nomination, and am dedicated to supporting NACRO members to **connect, learn, and grow**. If elected, I am committed to creating meaningful opportunities for all NACRO members — no matter the size or structure of your team or organization. Using all of my energy and enthusiasm to be sure our programming reflects the real needs of practitioners in the field, my goal is to help you feel supported and empowered in your work.



**Tracy Parish**, Director of External Relations and Strategic Partnerships, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

I joined NACRO in 2021 and have served on the conference planning committee and the membership committee. As an active participant on the membership committee, I am very involved in collaborating with the team to identify creative ways to increase current member engagement and retention while also developing strategies to attract new members to NACRO. One way I have supported membership committee goals is through collaborating with the team to establish our regional meet-up initiative for which I have served as co-lead of the Midwest region since the inception of the program. In addition, I have served as co-chair of the regional meet-up subcommittee for the past year. Prior to alliance management transitioning from the membership committee to the board of directors, I supported the development of alliances with other organizations in the corporate engagement space to identify ways value could be added to each organization through collaboration.

In addition to attending all NACRO annual conferences since I joined the organization, I have participated in the last four midwinter retreats, collaborating with my colleagues on the membership and conference planning committees to critically evaluate our approaches to delivering high value experiences to members and chartering our course forward to ensure the success and growth of our organization.

I hope to serve as co-chair of the membership committee to continue refining the successful approaches to new member recruitment and current member engagement and retention that we have implemented in recent years. In addition, key goals I would like to pursue include 1) improving the accuracy and breadth of our current and prospective member contact lists to maximize potential for member engagement and new member recruiting, and 2) increasing the successful cross-committee collaboration we have leveraged as an organization to ensure we are activating data insights and effective communication tools to support and expand our efforts to engage with prospective, new, and current members in a meaningful way that adds value to their experience with the organization.

In addition to my participation in NACRO, I serve as a founding member on the steering committee for the UIUC campus Corporate Relations Network (CRN), a networking body that addresses policy and best practices in corporate relations and that serves as a forum for corporate relations practitioners from across campus.

### **Professional Education Committee Co-Chair**



**Elizabeth Minard**, *Director of Corporate Engagement*, Iowa State University Foundation

Elizabeth Minard joined the ISU Foundation in September 2022 as director of development in the College of Engineering.

She joined the industry relations team in 2024 and, in this role, works to create mutually beneficial relationships between key corporate partners and university leadership, academic departments, faculty, and students. She

previously spent 12 years at the University of Northern Iowa working in financial aid, multicultural relations, and most recently as a corporate relations officer. Minard has volunteered in professional organizations such as the Iowa Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (IASFAA) and led the Awards Committee as chair and co-chair. She also volunteers in the Cedar Valley Catholic Schools Strategic Planning Committee. During her time at University of Northern Iowa, Minard served on different campus committees such as the Military & Veteran Student Services and the Diversity and Inclusion Council. Minard holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Northern Iowa

For the past two years, Elizabeth has served as a volunteer on the Professional Education Early Career Subcommittee. In her role as co-lead, she has led efforts to develop and deliver virtual programming, including the NACRO Virtual Bootcamp and other professional development opportunities designed for the early career track. Elizabeth has effectively facilitated subcommittee meetings, prepared meeting agendas, analyzed survey feedback from the Virtual Bootcamp to inform and improve future programming, and supported the onboarding of two new co-leads for the Early Career Subcommittee.

I am honored by the opportunity to be considered for the Professional Education Committee Chair-Elect position and to potentially serve NACRO members in this capacity. Over the past 15 years, my

personal and professional experiences have prepared me for this leadership role. NACRO has provided valuable professional development opportunities that have significantly shaped my career by enabling me to learn, grow, and build a strong professional network. NACRO resources have also informed Iowa State University's holistic industry relations model. It would be a privilege to help create and support professional development experiences that positively impact others, just as NACRO has done for me.



**Emily Witthohn**, Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, Elon University

Emily Witthohn serves as Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations at Elon University, where she leads strategy and engagement with corporate and philanthropic partners to advance institutional priorities across academic programs, student success initiatives, and community impact efforts. She manages a portfolio of partnerships spanning

healthcare, technology, financial services, and regional industry, aligning external investment with Elon's strategic vision.

Emily brings a decade of experience in corporate and foundation relations, beginning her career at the University of Pittsburgh, continuing at NC State University, and ultimately returning to her alma mater, Elon University, in 2024 to pursue work she is deeply passionate about at an institution she values greatly.

Her work centers on building integrated, multi-dimensional partnerships that connect philanthropy, experiential learning, workforce development, and research collaboration. She has helped advance initiatives in healthcare workforce development, AI-integrated curriculum partnerships, and community-based education programs, with a focus on aligning institutional priorities with external partner interests.

A proud Elon alumna, Emily brings a relationship-driven and highly collaborative approach to her work, leveraging alumni, parent, and corporate networks to drive meaningful engagement and long-term investment.

Emily is an active leader within NACRO and currently serves as Co-Lead of the Professional Education Committee's Mid-Career Subcommittee. In this role, she has helped design and deliver programming that supports leadership development, peer connection, and skill-building for mid-career professionals. She is a frequent contributor to NACRO conferences and webinars and is deeply committed to strengthening the profession through shared learning and practical application.

I am honored to be considered for the role of Co-Lead of the Professional Education Committee and the opportunity to serve NACRO in a broader board leadership capacity.

NACRO has played a truly formative role in my professional journey. Like many in this field, I've spent much of my career navigating work that lives in the gray—where roles are evolving, expectations aren't always clearly defined, and we're often building the plane while flying it. NACRO gave me the tools to step into that space with confidence, energy, and curiosity. It helped me see that the challenges I was facing weren't unique to me, but shared across a community of thoughtful, innovative professionals. Just as importantly, it gave me a network of peers I could learn from, benchmark against, and lean on in moments of uncertainty.

My experience on the Professional Education Committee—particularly as Co-Lead of the Mid-Career Subcommittee—has reinforced how powerful that kind of connection and support can be. Thoughtful, well-designed programming doesn't just build skills; it builds confidence, clarity, and a sense of belonging in this work.

In my current role at Elon, I work at the intersection of strategy, partnership development, and institutional alignment. That perspective shapes how I think about professional education: it should be practical and immediately useful, while also helping members zoom out and think more strategically about their role and impact within their institutions.

If elected, I would bring a strong commitment to both programmatic excellence and collaborative leadership, ensuring the work of the Professional Education Committee continues to align with and advance NACRO's broader strategic priorities. I would focus on:

- Building a more connected professional development continuum that supports members from early career through senior leadership
- Expanding access to meaningful, high-impact learning opportunities that reflect the realities and constraints of our work
- Strengthening collaboration across NACRO committees to reduce silos and create a more cohesive member experience

I am particularly passionate about creating spaces where members can be candid about challenges, learn from one another, and walk away with ideas they can put into practice right away.

It would be a privilege to serve in this role and to give back to a community that has had such a meaningful impact on my own growth.

## Member At-Large



**Patricia Allen**, Director of Corporate Engagement,  
Georgia Tech

My name is Patricia Allen, and I am a Director of Corporate Engagement within the Office of Corporate Engagement at Georgia Tech. In this role, I lead strategic industry partnerships, oversee corporate-sponsored programs, and work closely with faculty, alumni, and external stakeholders, while lending special attention to companies with major interests in recruiting and research within the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

My work emphasizes collaboration across academic units, strong stewardship of corporate partners, and the development of scalable engagement models that support institutional and corporate priorities and workforce outcomes. With over 10 years of experience in partnership development, program management, and stakeholder engagement, I bring a strong commitment to inclusive excellence and student success.

In my previous role with the College of Computing (CoC) at Georgia Tech, I served as the interim Corporate Relations Manager for GT Computing's Corporate Affiliates Program (CAP), where I consulted with companies on how to reach their recruiting goals and how to best engage with GT Computing students. I was also responsible for the stewardship of individual, foundation, and corporate donors, as well as gift processing and event management.

I am running for NACRO Member at Large to give back to the professional community that has helped shape my work in academic corporate relations.

I currently serve on the Professional Education Committee and have also volunteered with the Membership Committee, as well. I hope to contribute my experience in relationship-building, corporate engagement strategy, program development, and cross-institutional collaboration to the broader NACRO community. NACRO's role as a professional home for academic corporate relations officers is something that I value highly, and I would like to continue championing NACRO's work in strengthening knowledge-sharing, elevating best practices, and fostering inclusive participation across institutions of varying sizes and structures.

As a Member at Large, I will focus on supporting member engagement, amplifying diverse perspectives within the field, and helping NACRO continue to serve as a trusted resource for professionals navigating the evolving landscape of academic–industry partnerships.



**Terah Archie**, Senior Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, East Carolina University

My career encompasses more than thirty years of grant-seeking, fundraising, public relations and event planning, including 11 years at East Carolina University (ECU), the fourth largest public university in the state, where I have held development positions in the College of Education, the Medical and Health Sciences Foundation, and University Advancement.

I have been a part of ECU University Advancement Corporate and Foundation Relations team since July 2021 and was named Senior Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations on January 1, 2025. In this role, I work closely with university leadership, the Office of Research Administration, deans, faculty members, and my advancement colleagues in annual giving, major gifts, planned giving, and alumni engagement to seek, secure, and steward philanthropic gifts and grants in support of the university's mission to be a “national model for student success, public service, and regional transformation.” This work often requires breaking down silos, aligning stakeholders, and building relationships that advance complex initiatives benefiting both donors and the institution.

I have been a NACRO member for over two years. During that time, I attended the 2024 Annual Conference in Raleigh, joined the Benchmarking Committee, attended NACRO Mid-Winter Leadership Meeting UC Irvine, and the NACRO 2025 Annual Conference in Kansas City. As a member of NACRO's Benchmarking Committee, I co-chaired the Career Exploration Survey sub-committee alongside Angela Dudley and then John Garnetti. The Benchmarking Committee is currently reviewing the results of the Career Exploration Survey in preparation for a presentation at the NACRO 2026 Annual Conference in Salt Lake City.

My work on the Benchmarking Committee and specifically with the Career Exploration Survey, puts me in an advantageous position to assist Incoming Presidents Tammy Eickhoff and Jason King with NACRO's transition to the **Novi** membership platform. The data gleaned from the Career Exploration Survey and the Corporate Relations Reimagined white paper released last fall offer a foundation NACRO can use to strengthen acquisition, retention, and renewal strategies. For NACRO to grow we must give individuals working in corporate relations a reason to join and then keep giving both them and the institutions they serve reasons to stay engaged. To grow and sustain NACRO's membership, we must clearly understand why corporate relations professionals join, what value they expect, and how NACRO can continue to meet the evolving needs of both individuals and their institutions. Equally important is understanding why members leave and using that insight to strengthen our professional development and engagement strategies.

If selected as the NACRO Member at Large, I look forward to collaborating with Tammy and Jason on the Transition to NOVI and to using membership data and other Benchmarking data to acquire, retain and renew membership. NACRO has played a significant role in my own professional development, and I have consistently shared NACRO best practices with leaders across my institution—extending the organization’s impact well beyond my individual membership. NACRO is critical to defining the role and impact of corporate (and foundation) relations across the higher education landscape. This was important before the disruptions in federal funding but has come into sharper focus as our institutions pivot from a federal funding focus to a more holistic funding focus that seeks stronger engagement with corporate funders.

I would be honored to contribute my experience, perspective, and commitment to NACRO’s continued growth and impact as Member at Large.