

## **Ballot Questionnaire: Carrie Neerland, Region V Representative**

### **Ballot Question 1: What makes you qualified for this position? Why are you interested in this position?**

For nearly two decades, I have been involved with ACNM. I have helped lead change in our state affiliate through multiple projects and initiatives including the creation of student scholarships, the Committee for Equity and Justice, and the popular regional interprofessional conference, Optimal Outcomes in Perinatal, Sexual, and Reproductive Health. I have also served at the national level in multiple capacities including chairing the newly re-established Membership and Marketing Committee, as an ad-hoc ACNM Annual Meeting Planning Committee member where I serve as an abstract reviewer for the Racism and Health Disparities Track, and now as chair of the Division of Membership and Publications. In my current role, I am committed to supporting the committees and volunteers within the division including MOCC, DEIB, Students and New Midwives, Membership and Marketing, Clinical Standards and Documents, and Publications. I am passionate about supporting and mentoring midwife leaders, advocating for student midwives, continuing my path of allyship with BIPOC, and moving ACNM toward becoming an anti-racist organization.

I am interested in serving as Region V Representative because I believe I can utilize my skills of coalition-building, mentorship, creativity, and big picture leadership to move midwifery forward. I am excited about the potential to work with midwives and leaders in my region to support their work within their unique political and practice landscapes. I am also particularly eager to serve as a board liaison for the incredible committees within ACNM, to support and further their initiatives.

### **Ballot Question 2: Visit ACNM's Strategic Plan [HERE](#). What part of the strategic plan embodies your personal philosophy?**

I am looking forward to the implementation of the ACNM's new strategic plan for 2021-2024, specifically the commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (I would add justice, as well). As an organization, we have begun to take steps toward becoming a more diverse, inclusive, and anti-racist organization; however, this commitment needs to undergird all we do as an organization and become embedded as our organizational and midwifery culture. Further, we must recognize the history of midwifery in the US and ACNM and commit to truth and reconciliation. With this shared commitment, the other goals of national advancement of midwifery, member engagement and support, and so on can be realized. I believe that this core commitment will lead to a stronger national organization, stronger affiliates, stronger midwives, stronger partnerships, and improved outcomes for those we care for.

### **Ballot Question 3: Visit the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) [HERE](#). What ideas do you have for enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging?**

As stated above, I believe that DEIB should be the core commitment of our organization and should be embedded in our organizational culture. The new Racial Equity Toolkit, hiring of a diversity and inclusion consultant, the creation of a Racism and Health Disparities track for the annual meeting, the anti-racism webinar series, and a number of other initiatives are all steps in the right direction, toward anti-racism and justice. To further embed this core commitment, divisions, committees, state affiliates, and other groups within ACNM should include this as an agenda item and dedicate time at each meeting to discuss diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. This may look different for each group, however, the dedicated time places DEIB as central to the work of each. In addition, we must align this core commitment with the people and communities that we serve. To do this we must engage and partner with the people we serve and collaborate with, support, and amplify organizations that are leading the way such as BMMA and the Black Maternal Health Caucus. We must also engage partners and large donors to create a national educational pathways project to bring awareness to the midwifery profession for BIPOC students in elementary and high school and to fund education for Black and Indigenous midwives. Finally, ACNM should hire a full time DEIB officer to coordinate these efforts across the college.

**Ballot Question 4: What is your vision for innovation and improvement within ACNM?**

In our Minnesota Affiliate and our national organization, student involvement continues to increase and is at an all-time high. We should continue to invest in student members and our midwifery profession's future. Not only are voting rights important for students but creating a culture where every midwife is an ACNM member is vital. This is also critical for our organization's financial solvency and political power. Providing every midwifery student with a free year of membership or providing one free year of membership in the first year of practice would encourage early buy-in and engagement, provide access to ACNM at a time where finances may be more stressed, and create lifelong members. Additionally, the creation of a Junior Fellows program would give newer midwives the opportunity for structured mentorship and a pathway to ACNM Fellowship. Finally, midwives are the most creative and committed group of professionals that I have ever encountered. Midwives are filmmakers, podcasters, authors, photographers, device-makers, and more. ACNM should work with donors to partner with midwives on creative endeavors to support their work, thus bringing greater awareness to the midwifery profession.