

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

In some ways my entire life has prepared me for this position. My background in communication theory and performance before entering midwifery helps me feel at home in the public arena, while extensive experiences with leadership bodies has taught me how to recognize and facilitate positive group dynamics and build teams. I have started and own 2 businesses, have helped start 2 birth centers, have led a major strategic planning initiative for a 400-member religious organization, and have cofounded a midwifery association (Association of Independent Midwives of Maryland) that has facilitated the successful passage of two midwifery laws. And finally, my doctoral work gave me further training in group dynamics and organizational development. I am interested in this position because what is clear to me is that what ACNM needs right now is a human focus. We have major financial challenges, and those must certainly be addressed both in the short and long term, but we also have human relations challenges which must be addressed, and whose resolution could ultimately lead to a healthier financial picture by increasing the proportion of midwives who join ACNM. Right now there are over 14,000 AMCB-certified midwives, and less than 6,000 are members of ACNM. This is a fundamental issue for our organization. We need to discover what our members, and our NON-members, want and need from their professional organization, so that we can transform ACNM into an association that serves midwives of every age, race, gender identity, and practice focus (perinatal, primary care, reproductive health, abortion care, trans care, menopause care) in every practice setting—small, large, public, private, institution-based, and community-based—as well as educators and entrepreneurs. We need to show our members that we value THEM, if we want them to value their membership in ACNM. I am interested in preserving this organization through transformation and healing, so that our everyone in our profession has somewhere to turn for education, legislation, outreach, and professional support and development. For that, we need to have financial and administrative transparency, stability, and longevity, which are achievable with a sound assessment process. S.O.A.P. applies here! Let's hear subjective input from an array of voices, look objectively at available data and gather whatever else is needed for a full picture, figure out what the problems are, and create a plan to address them, and re-evaluate. We are midwives—we know how to do this! And finally, one of my strengths in my personal and professional life has been building community. If ACNM is to reach the pinnacle of sustainability and organizational health, it must be a place where members find community, and that is something to which I bring passion, skill, and experience. As a keeper of professional midwifery wisdom, practical administration experience, and ACNM institutional memory, I am prepared to roll up my sleeves and work with the Board and Staff to facilitate a smooth transition to a viable, thriving membership organization.

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

“Supporting our members,” “supporting our affiliates,” “national advancement of midwifery,” and “global engagement” encompass the first 4 domains of our strategic plan, and all 4 of them are critically important, but none of them can happen without the 5th domain, which is Organizational Capacity. We need to support volunteer leadership in a way that creates an easy, joyful path of succession from one leader to the next, so that the same small number of people don't continue to run everything. We need “governance and organizational policies and procedures that are transparent, user-friendly, and accessible to all.” We desperately need sufficient financial resources, and one of the places to find this is increased revenue from doubling our membership, which can only happen with sincere outreach and deep listening to those who have been disenfranchised or disenchanting from joining. We need “budget stability with healthy, transparent state-of-the-art internal controls and accounting processes,” which will require a hard look at existing structures and investigation of where ACNM has failed to sustain

itself, and how the situation can be rectified. And we need the right management and staff, technology, and strategic planning processes to support the ongoing work of the College. We need “continuous enhancements of our brand, reputation, and relationships with key stakeholders” so that we are at every table where we risk being on the menu, and we also need to focus on the care of our members, who are the life-blood of this membership organization. And finally, with a history rooted in racism, we have truth-and-reconciliation work to do in order to facilitate the healing needed to move forward. We have many silos at ACNM working on this—now we need to join them all in an interconnected web focusing on dissemination, because, for instance, our very excellent toolkit is only limited by the number of people who actually know about it and use it.

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

In ancient times, in many cultures, when there was a problem in the community, it was taken to a council of elders who would meditate, discuss, weigh various factors, and come up with a solution, or solutions, for the problem. It seems to me that we should be able to do this at ACNM. However, we need to look to elders outside of ACNM to help us, because in our case, it is sometimes the younger members of ACNM who can lead us out of the desert, and it is sometimes older members who hold us back. Hearing from diverse voices—both young and old—is crucial to creating a long-term truth-and-reconciliation process that will hopefully lead us all to a place of peace, understanding, forgiveness, and reparations. Elders and youngers with expertise in the areas of equity and inclusion, antiracism, and truth-and-reconciliation processes can help us create our own process, and it is my belief that this has to happen FIRST, before we can move forward with solidarity, both within our organization, and with other midwifery organizations. We will need all of us to advance midwifery as the gold standard in the care of women and people who deserve health care that sees each individual, not just as two breasts and a uterus, but as a whole person deserving respectful, compassionate care.

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

I would like to see things get shaken up a little. What would it be like to take out each aspect of the way ACNM is run, shine a light on it, dust it off, and see if improvements can be made that will make things simpler, more streamlined, more equitable and inclusive, and more user-friendly. What if every time you called ACNM, a live voice on the other end said, “Good morning, ACNM, how can I be of help?” When I worked at ACNM in the 2000’s as a professional services consultant, part of my job was to answer calls and emails from distressed midwives, reporters, researchers, health care industry partners, and others who wanted to reap the benefits of the unique body of knowledge that is midwifery. That job no longer exists. I would like to see ACNM remember to value our most valuable resource: our members. Instead of making it difficult for midwife entrepreneurs to connect with other members, let’s make it easy. Instead of leaving members who want to reach us frustrated with the endless connections to voice-mail, let’s connect them to the staff, and while we have them on the phone, let’s ask them what they would like to contribute to their organization. When there is a volunteer job to be done, let’s reach out to self-identified experts, instead of calling on the same 10 people over and over. It’s harder, but it’s doable, and the result is a richer, happier, more engaged membership. And while we’re at it, we need to reach out in a new way to the other midwifery organizations (NACPM, NARM, MEAC, MANA, AMCB, and ACME), and join forces to give care that is respectful and equitable, recognizes each client’s autonomy and sovereignty, and puts the client in the driver’s seat regarding choices in attendant and place of birth. To work for all of this, we need to work together, and to work together, we all need to be valued for our contributions.

Ballot Question 5: What are two improvements that ACNM should prioritize and how would you help address them in your role?

1. ACNM needs to prioritize relationships. I would build in some time for human interaction into every board meeting and every ACNM business meeting. I believe that every time we come together as humans on a mission to do a job together (like run an organization), we do best when we take the time to connect as people, to increase interpersonal understanding and find our common ground. When those who are leading at the Board level take the time to connect with each other as human beings, it makes it easier to then turn outward and see all individual members as human beings worth the time and trouble it takes to get to know someone and learn about their hopes, dreams, and desires. When we can do that, we will have happy members of every sort who encourage others to join.

2. ACNM also needs to prioritize judicious use of our existing resources and building strategies for increasing our resources. We need to form a team of midwifery and non-midwifery experts in financial management and fundraising, first to administer an investigation/assessment of our current situation, identify steps to stop the decline in our fiscal health, and then to establish sustainable revenue streams and efficient resource management for the future, emphasizing membership recruitment, engagement, and retention. This circles back to our truth-and-reconciliation process to heal from our history, as well as our deep analysis of ways that ACNM has “turned off” previously-engaged members. We need all of us if we are to survive and thrive as a healthy, vibrant, dynamic professional association, representing the best profession on earth.