

## Candidate for Director – Professional Development

**Kelly Rownd**

NC State University



### Why are you interested in this Board position?

I am honored to be considered for the Director of Professional Development Board position. SoACE has been a pivotal part of my career services journey, supporting my growth from a new professional learning best practices as a career coach to navigating leadership roles both within and beyond the organization. This journey has been shaped by the incredible people and connections I've made through SoACE, which have had a profound impact on my professional path. I have experienced firsthand the transformative power of this community and would be thrilled to collaborate with fellow Board members to ensure that SoACE remains a supportive and empowering network. It is a community that champions its members while fostering a culture of care, collaboration, and shared expertise. The work this organization does is truly inspiring, and I am eager to contribute to its ongoing success. I'm excited about the opportunity to oversee professional development efforts, including supporting initiatives like the LEAD program. Having personally benefited from these programs, I understand their value and look forward to helping others experience the same growth and support.

### What qualifications do you have that would make you a strong fit for this Board position?

I believe I could make a meaningful impact in this role by leveraging my SoACE experiences and my years of coaching and mentorship. Over the past three years, I've been actively involved with the LEAD program—first as a cohort member, then as a member of the Design Team, and now as Chair. This experience has given me the opportunity to work closely with Erica, witnessing the impact she has made on the program while also gaining insight into the efforts of the Board. I've appreciated learning more about her role, particularly how it connects to the LEAD program, the Board, and the broader SoACE community. I see this position as uniquely positioned to ensure that our SoACE community continues to have valuable opportunities for leadership development. In my current role at NC State, serving on the Professional Development team within the Graduate School, I've been able to approach my work from a holistic perspective, recognizing the critical importance of prioritizing professional development. Also, my career journey has given me a broad perspective from working as a career coach and manager in a centralized career center to overseeing graduate student career development in a decentralized office. Having experience at various institutions, I bring a range of insights that inform my approach to leadership and professional development. My ability to adapt, collaborate, communicate effectively, and prioritize accountability makes me well-prepared to contribute to this role and support SoACE's ongoing success.

### What leadership roles have you held within SoACE and other similar organizations?

I have been a member of SoACE for the past six years and began my formal leadership journey through the LEAD program three years ago. During my first year as a cohort member, I gained a deeper

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understanding of my strengths, skills, and leadership style at a pivotal point in my career as I prepared to transition to a new university. The content, connections, and mentorship provided through LEAD helped clarify my career goals and equipped me for my next leadership role. As a Design Team member, I used my experience as a former cohort member to offer a unique perspective and support the program's continued growth and improvement. I also took on the role of social media coordinator, managing communications with the cohort, preparing meeting recaps, and coordinating pre-work and follow-up materials. This year, as Chair, I serve as the primary point of contact for Erica and ensure that the Design Team remains organized, prepared, and aligned in our efforts. I also continue to oversee communications and participate in the monthly meetings led by Camille for SoACE-wide communications. These meetings have deepened my understanding of organizational communication, the importance of storytelling to highlight LEAD's impact, and strategies to better engage SoACE members. Additionally, I have been an active member of both the LACE and NCACE chapters during my time at the LSU Olinde Career Center and now at the NC State Graduate School, further broadening my involvement and connection within the SoACE community.