

**Name** Missy Mathis-Hanlon

**Institution** Syracuse University

**Job Title** Director, Parent and Family Services

**Please write a statement describing why you will be a good member of the AHEPPP Board of Directors. Please include particular skills that will suit this role and the ways in which the candidate's leadership will contribute to AHEPPP's mission, programs and initiatives. Limit to 500 words.**

Thank you for considering my application for a position on the AHEPPP Board of Directors. I have dedicated over twenty-two years to serving parents, family members, and supporters and have a very established love for working with this constituency. Over the years, in conversations with families and in evaluations they have written, I have learned just how important it is for them to feel heard, be treated as valued partners and not as a problem, and how much they appreciate those of us who do this work.

I chose to apply for a position this year because I am at a point in life where my children are more independent, and I have more time to commit to my career and related professional endeavors. Becoming a member of the Board of Directors of AHEPPP is a goal of mine because I appreciate being among group of people that is committed to working with families in support of student development and success. AHEPPP is a caring and supportive body of colleagues in the field—people that are open and willing to share knowledge and insight. It feels like “home” to me.

Though I have been involved in AHEPPP for several years and have previously presented at a conference and at a virtual session, this year has been my first year serving more formally as a member of the Awards Committee. This has been a great experience—I have had the opportunity to meet more colleagues in the field and to use some of my skillset in marketing/design on a subcommittee of the group. My professional and volunteer leadership experience in the areas of strategic planning, public relations/marketing, and serving on other boards can be valuable assets that I bring to the table.

My experience includes a long-held interest in and effort around issues of equity, belonging, and inclusion. Twenty-six years ago, I encouraged and supported a student employee as he submitted a proposal to create a “Rainbow Task Force” at Syracuse University. Though I worked behind the scenes, I saw the impact when the LGBT Resource Center opened on campus a few years later due to the work of the Task Force. For most of my career, I have worked with a group of colleagues to provide a more equitable and inclusive experience for first-generation, marginalized families and supporters and their students through the Project Transition program on Family Weekend. We are currently working to revive and re-invent some year-round aspects of the program and find more sustainable resources.

In addition to some of the experience I can bring to the table, there are also some areas that I am looking for professional growth around—including learning more about financial management and fiduciary oversight for a national organization. The bottom line is that I want to help AHEPPP grow and continue to influence the higher education landscape. I hope that you will sincerely consider my application and elect me to membership on the AHEPPP Board of Directors.