



**Dr. Sonya L. Ford, LCPC, NCC, NCSC, BC-TMH**  
**Director of Counseling**  
**University Counseling Center, American University of Antigua**

I am honored to provide my letter of interest to be a nominee for the AUCCCD Board. As the first time Director of the University Counseling Center at the American University of Antigua, I have benefitted from all AUCCCD has to offer. From the listserv to the Director's Toolkit, from new Director's meetings to participating in the mentor program, from webinars and workshops to the annual conference, AUCCCD has enhanced my role as a director for the past two years. Although I am new to the organization, I believe that now is the time for me to give back, as I see the value in active membership, collaboration, and advocacy. Thus, I am heeding the call. My journey to being a director was not a straight path. Although I studied psychology in my undergraduate years at Old Dominion University, I began my path as a traffic reporter and on-air personality. Working in broadcasting allowed me to reach the masses in a unique way. My calling to the counseling profession came after participating in a career day at a local school in the Washington, D.C. area and spending time with the school counselor. This encounter reinvigorated my passion to help others. I immediately enrolled in graduate school at The Johns Hopkins University and began my counseling journey, first as a school counselor, then as a clinical community counselor. Along the way, my passion for the field of counseling led me to further my studies and pursue my doctorate. My dissertation focused on counselor advocacy, as I have a love for this field and how we all make a difference in the lives of those we serve. I will bring this same passion to AUCCCD. I believe the best advocacy comes when you can collaborate with colleagues through professional organizations, as one powerful voice.

As a school counselor, I worked at all levels (elementary, middle, and high) and was an Elementary Counselor Specialist for 150 elementary schools. I was an active member of the Maryland School Counselor Association and sat on their Board in a variety of roles. I was also honored to receive the Maryland School Counselor of the Year Award twice, once as an elementary school counselor and once as a middle school counselor. I was an active member of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and presented at local, state, and national conferences, and was recognized at the White House by Mrs. Michelle Obama as a nominee for the ASCA School Counselor of the Year Award. My advocacy for the profession continued as I served as an Advisory Team Member for the National Office of School Counselor Advocacy, and I was invited to be an Advisory Board Member for Bowie State University's Department of

Counseling. My advocacy also stretched into the community, as I was a Commissioner for the Charles County Commission for Women. My journey as a counselor has led me from the United States, to Kuwait, to the beautiful island of Antigua and Barbuda as a first-time director. I have appreciated the support of AUCCCD. I came into this role, starting from scratch, creating a strategic plan, policies and procedures, and advocating for additional staff. For the two years that I have been a member, AUCCCD has been my guiding light on this new journey of rebuilding. I would be honored to give back as a member of the Board. I believe, if I selected to serve, I will serve with a servant heart as I embrace AUCCCD's guiding values – collaboration, collegiality, DEI, ethics and integrity, holistic wellness, professional development, and scholarship – to advocate for collegial mental health. I am ready to “contribute, learn, work and have some fun!” Thank you for your time and consideration.