

NACOLE CANDIDATE ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidates are encouraged to fill out the following questionnaire, to give NACOLE members relevant information when voting for Board members.

Name: Barrie Gewanter

- 1) Position Sought: NACOLE Board Member at-Large
- 2) Geographic Location: Syracuse, NY – Onondaga County – Upstate New York
- 3) Current Oversight Position and Organization:
Human Rights Director, Title VI & ADA Coordinator - Onondaga County, NY
- 4) Number of Years as a NACOLE Member: 4 years as an organization member
1 year as an individual member (6 months)
- 5) Please list Annual Conferences or training opportunities in which you have attended:

2017 NACOLE Conference – Spokane, Washington
2018 NACOLE Conference – St. Petersburg, Florida
2019 NACOLE Conference – Detroit, Michigan
2020 NACOLE Virtual Conference
April 17, 2020 – Northeast Virtual Regional Networking Session
NACOLE Webinars:
March 24, 2020 -Discussion of Strategies for Jails, Prisons, and Oversight Bodies
During the COVID-19 Crisis (March 24, 2020)
June 3, 2020- Making Factual Determinations, Applying Legal Standards, and
Reaching Allegation Outcomes, Presenter: Flo Finkle

- 6) Are you currently a member of the NACOLE Board? No.

If so, in what capacity:

___ President
___ Vice President
___ Board Member At-Large

For the following questions, please respond in no more than 200 words.

- 1) Why do you want to serve on the NACOLE Board?

I have become increasingly active in NACOLE, and have served on the Strategic Planning Committee for two years. This has given me a sense of the challenges NACOLE faces, but also a desire to see NACOLE evolve and have a much more significant impact nationally. The current surge in calls for police reform has created a dynamic environment in which NACOLE can build its capacity and resources. I'd like to add my creative energies to that effort at a more instrumental level. As part of that, I'd like to help NACOLE expand its support for jail and prison oversight, and further integrate this into its public profile and programs. For NACOLE to reach its full potential, I believe the organization's approach to civilian oversight should not be focused primarily on policing, but on a broader vision of how the criminal justice system operates through law enforcement agencies. The current calls for reform will inevitably turn towards jails and prisons as extensions of the over policing of Black and Brown communities, as well as its all-to-frequent endpoint. NACOLE needs to be ready to be seen as credible a resource on policy and practice in this arena as it is for policing.

2) What skills/experience/qualities do you bring to the NACOLE Board?

As part of my professional work I have analyzed police policy and practices for over 20 years. I have investigated police shootings and deaths in jail custody. I have also assisted many people impacted by police misconduct who lived through these encounters. I know what it is to be present when speaking with a victim, to interview witnesses and to interact with the family of a person who died in tragic circumstances.

I have devised and led strategic campaigns seeking law enforcement reform. I have been involved in drafting or revising legislation for an existing police oversight agency and a new jail oversight agency. I led the formation of the jail agency and established its initial infrastructure.

I have served as a non-profit executive director, managing budgets, grants, staff and operations. I have academic training and professional experience in survey research design, and recently applied this skill to help craft a NACOLE member survey.

I seem to excel at conceiving and articulating strategic ideas for organizations and advocacy projects. I enjoy collaborative thinking and project work. I am not at all reluctant to speak up in meetings and groups. I am also known as an effective public speaker and presenter.

3) What challenges does NACOLE face as a rapidly growing membership organization?

NACOLE cannot grow on resources primarily drawn from membership dues and conference fees. It needs to diversify its financial resources and create a strategic approach to fundraising. NACOLE's effectiveness is fundamentally limited with only two staff. They are amazing, but cannot do more than they already are. Donations must be increased, but not only or primarily from established members. Major donors must be identified and solicited. NACOLE also needs to find ways to cultivate its newer members, to draw them closer to the organization and utilize their energies. New pathways are needed for committee service, especially for people who have been involved for less than 10 years. Individual memberships should be promoted and increased.

NACOLE's membership structure rests primarily on professionals in the field and their agencies. Training also seems to be geared to a staff constituency. This is not adequate for NACOLE to grow. The organization needs to support oversight board members as well as staff, and cultivate them as long term donors. It also needs to create more of a pathway for community advocates and people who have been impacted by the criminal justice system to feel supported and valued, without diluting the importance of oversight professionals.

- 4) How have you contributed to NACOLE's work? Please include all committees you have served on or led, as well as any other NACOLE volunteer efforts.

I have served on the Strategic Planning Committee for two consecutive years. In this role, I have identified ways to further integrate jail and prison, as well as campus and transit patrol, oversight into NACOLE's public presence and training. I have also spoken about considering ways to incorporate the voices of people impacted by the criminal justice system into our work and activities.

I served on the conference planning committee for the St. Petersburg conference, and was a session shepherd in Detroit. I co-organized the Origins of Oversight session in Detroit that was selected as the first plenary session. This came out of a discussion with Jerry Threat about how important it was for oversight staff to remain grounded in the reasons why many oversight agencies were created - to prevent a recurrence of individual and collective tragedy. We both felt that there is a danger of losing this essential grounding as the field inevitably becomes more professionalized.

I am co-presenting a 2020 virtual session to help agencies be ready to provide language assistance to people with limited English proficiency and to accommodate people with disabilities. This is another part of walking the walk on diversity and inclusion.

- 5) Please share highlights of your background/experience in law enforcement oversight.

As a regional representative of the ACLU I analyzed police policy and practices for many years, and continue to do so in my current position within County government. I have conducted intake with many victims of police misconduct and identified their available paths of redress. I have investigated police shootings and deaths in jail custody at the request of local Black and Latinx leaders.

I have devised and led strategic campaigns for law enforcement reform. I worked with municipal leaders to draft or revise legislation for an existing police oversight agency and a new jail oversight agency. I assisted the reconstituted board of the police agency in its first year, and then led the formation of the jail agency and established its initial infrastructure.

I have worked productively with local police leadership to address issues related to public protest and related municipal procedures, to develop a policy governing the use of stationary police surveillance cameras, and to revise agency civilian complaint policy and forms. I have worked with jail command staff to identify gaps in policy and procedure related to

accommodating inmate's religious practice, providing language assistance to inmates and visitors, and creating new policy on accommodating inmates with disabilities.

6) If elected/re-elected, what would you most like to accomplish as a Board member?

I would most like to help NACOLE increasing the level and diversity of it funding resources, further the integration of jail and prison and other non-patrol forms of oversight into its public profile and programs, expand its membership base and support, and identify effective ways to bring the voices of people impacted by the criminal justice system more into its work.

7) Additional information for voters to consider:

I am passionate about justice and preserving human dignity. I try my best to walk the walk in concert with my words. I strive to be a consistent and reliable ally. I am thoughtful and curious, and always eager to learn.