Candidate: D. Betsy McCoach, Ph.D. Position: At-Large Member

Biography

D. Betsy McCoach, Ph.D. is professor of Educational Psychology at University of Connecticut. Dr. McCoach is co-Principal Investigator for the National Center for Research on Gifted Education as well as 3 others currently funded Javits grants. Dr. McCoach served as the founding co-editor of the Journal of Advanced Academics and was the co-editor of Gifted Child Quarterly from 2012-2017. Dr. McCoach has published over 100 peer review journal articles, dozens of book chapters, and several books in the areas of gifted education and educational research. Dr. McCoach has served as the Network Chair for the Research and Evaluation Network and the SIG Chair for the Research on Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development SIG of AERA. Dr. McCoach won NAGC’s 2023 Distinguished Scholar award and has twice been co-author of GCQ papers of the year. Prior to pursuing her Ph.D., Dr. McCoach was a teacher of the gifted/gifted specialist in Pennsylvania.

Personal Statement

I have spent the past 29 years passionately involved in the field of gifted education, first as a public-school teacher, and afterward as a researcher. My research experience in gifted education is extensive: I have served as a co-Principal Investigator for the National Center for Research on Gifted Education, co-editor of Gifted Child Quarterly (2012-2017) and founding co-editor of the Journal of Advanced Academics (2006-2011). I am the 2023 recipient of NAGC’s Distinguished Scholar award. I have served as chair and program chair for the Research and Evaluation Network and the SIG Chair for the Research on Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development SIG of AERA, and I served on the Massachusetts Gifted and Talented Advisory Council from 2019-2022. I have also served on both the Publications Committee and the Awards Committee of NAGC. I look forward to the opportunity to use my knowledge, research skills to collaborate with NAGC members and leaders to tackle some of the most pressing issues currently facing NAGC and the field of gifted education more broadly.
A. How would your knowledge, experience, abilities, and vision contribute to increasing the public’s urgency to support the needs of gifted and talented children and youth?

I have spent the last twenty-five years engaged in research on gifted education and talent development, and I look forward to the opportunity to share my knowledge to advocate for the needs of highly able students whose educational needs are not being met in their current academic environment. I am especially passionate about identifying and serving students from groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in gifted and talented programs.

B. How would your knowledge, experience, abilities, and vision contribute to advocating for the adoption of policies that promote programs and services in which gifted and talented children and youth will thrive?

Policies (or lack thereof) at the national, state, and local levels have a profound influence on the services that are available to high ability students. My work with the National Center for Research on Gifted Education and the Massachusetts Advisory Council has provided me with opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders at local, state, and national levels to influence gifted education policies. I look forward to working with NAGC to influence promote the adoption of policies that provide opportunities for students to engage in academically challenging activities and to reach their full potential.

C. How would your knowledge, experience, abilities, and vision contribute to empowering supporters to implement effective practices for all gifted and talented children and youth in homes, schools, and communities?

I have worked collaboratively with schools, districts, and state departments to disseminate the results of our research and to promote evidence-based practices in gifted education. As a member of the NAGC Board of Directors, I would collaborate with the board, the membership, and federal, state, and local agencies to promote effective practices to meet the needs of gifted children. In addition to all the above, Board members also have the responsibility of ensuring the continued financial health of the organization. I have a great deal of financial management experience as a Principal Investigator, the Director of DATIC, and the founder and chair of the Modern Modeling Methods conference. I look forward to using my fiscal management skills and administrative experiences to collaborate with NAGC leadership and staff to promote the financial well-being of the organization.