Candidate: Catherine Little, Ph.D.                      Position: President-Elect

Biography
Catherine Little is a Professor in Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Connecticut. She received her MA and PhD in gifted education from William and Mary and worked in the Center for Gifted Education there prior to coming to UConn. Her research interests include professional learning, differentiation of curriculum and instruction for advanced learners, and classroom questioning practices. Catherine has recently served as the Project Director for Project SPARK and Project LIFT, two Javits-funded initiatives focused on working with teachers to recognize and respond to advanced academic potential in the early grades, particularly in students from underserved populations. She has served on the NAGC Board of Directors as a Member-at-Large, as Treasurer, and as Governance Secretary.

Personal Statement
NAGC has been a constant presence and influence on my professional path. I am excited about the prospect of giving back by serving as the President-Elect and then President of the NAGC Board of Directors. I have great respect for the commitment of our members and leaders and for the power of the NAGC community to support gifted and talented learners and those who work with them. NAGC is poised to continue to strengthen equitable opportunities for talent development, and I will contribute my energy and leadership to NAGC’s efforts to connect research to practice, cultivate inclusion, pursue advocacy efforts, and engage a wide range of stakeholders. My own experiences with research, teaching, and outreach, combined with prior service on the Board, have prepared me well to facilitate conversations and collaboration toward NAGC’s goals. I look forward to encouraging innovative efforts to build bridges across groups within NAGC and broaden our community with partnerships. I will seek creative opportunities to enhance how the organization supports current members and enables effective networking and collaboration. Further, I am committed to ensuring the financial health of the organization and engaging in thoughtful decision-making efforts that support NAGC’s future.
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?

NAGC has the opportunity and the responsibility to advance public understanding of the needs of gifted and talented children and youth and to demonstrate the urgency of responding to those needs, particularly through efforts to increase equitable access to advanced learning. NAGC’s communication efforts must reflect consideration of how best to engage with the fast-moving media landscape while also ensuring quality and trustworthiness in our message. I have engaged with the challenges involved in these efforts for many years, and I look forward to working with other Board members, staff, and members to help NAGC to continue to be a timely and trusted resource.

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?

The influence of policies on the quality and scope of experiences for gifted learners in schools is clear; when there are sensible policies in place to promote identification and services, gifted learners’ benefit, and when critical issues such as underrepresentation are brought into policy conversations, gifted programs can influence positive change and promote access for learners from a wide range of backgrounds. NAGC brings together knowledgeable stakeholders from many contexts and provides a space through which we can network and leverage our collective expertise with policymakers. I bring strengths in communication and collaboration that I can contribute to NAGC’s efforts to facilitate networking at the national level, with a focus on learning from one another about how to accomplish our common goals.

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?

NAGC’s focus on practices reflects the value the organization places on empowering those who work with gifted learners to have the resources they need. Further, the current emphasis in the NAGC Strategic Plan on connecting research and practice to advance equity and excellence demonstrates the organization’s commitment to promoting evidence-supported practices and research efforts that speak to the needs of practitioners and families. I have focused much of my career on supporting the practices of teachers in responding to gifted and talented learners, with specific attention to approaches in curriculum and instruction that engage learners from diverse backgrounds and challenge them to grow. I look forward to engaging various stakeholders within NAGC, including researchers, practitioners, and parents, to promote effective communication about critical questions of research and practice and how these groups may bring their perspectives together to pursue next steps for achieving shared goals.