



The Role of the ARCA Student Representative and the Importance of Student Engagement

Student involvement has long been a vital part of ARCA's mission to advance excellence in rehabilitation counseling. Students bring fresh perspectives, evolving interests, and a deep commitment to the future of the field. The ARCA Student Representative position was created to ensure that those perspectives are not only heard but meaningfully integrated into ARCA's ongoing work.

The Student Representative serves a three-year elected term on the ARCA Board, functioning as a bridge between student members and organizational leadership. This role focuses on strengthening the connection between academic programs and the professional community, creating pathways for students to engage early and with intention. It also provides a direct channel for student voices to influence ARCA's priorities, initiatives, and long-term vision for the profession.

Student engagement is essential because students are not simply preparing to join the rehabilitation counseling workforce, they are already contributing to it. Their experiences in coursework, practicum settings, and research expose them to the changing needs of clients and the evolving landscape of disability and rehabilitation services. When students participate in ARCA's conversations, committees, events, and initiatives, they bring energy and insight that expand the organization's capacity to innovate and adapt. Early engagement also supports a stronger professional pipeline: students who connect with ARCA during training often find mentorship, community, and leadership opportunities that follow them well into their careers.

In stepping into the Student Representative role, my hope is to continue strengthening these connections. I want students to feel welcomed and informed, but also invited to shape ARCA alongside experienced professionals. Part of this includes increasing awareness of student-focused opportunities such as ARCA's robust library of webinars and the many ways students can participate in committees, presentations, and collaborative learning. Another part involves

deepening partnerships with academic programs so that students across the country, regardless of modality or location, have easy access to the resources ARCA offers. Most importantly, I want to highlight the issues that directly impact students as they navigate training, practicum, licensure, and entry into the profession.

For students, ARCA can become a home base, a place for connection, growth, and support. For educators and programs, encouraging even small steps toward involvement can offer students a sense of belonging and professional identity that strengthens them throughout their careers. My invitation to both groups is simple: let's continue building a vibrant and engaged student community within ARCA. The future of rehabilitation counseling depends on it, and together we can ensure that future is bright, connected, and grounded in shared purpose.