

Vision Statement for 2019 AUCD Board Nominees

Name of Candidate: Elizabeth Holliday Morgan

AUCD Member Organization: University of California Davis

Current Position (role and date range): Graduate Trainee (2016-present) and UCEDD Program Coordinator (2014-present)

Total Years Employed/Active in an AUCD Member Center or Program: 5 years

My vision for the Association

I describe myself as a petite person with a mammoth drive. Being a woman of color with an invisible disability, I know that I must make an impact in this world and use my voice to advocate change and pave paths for future scholar activists. I plan to do this through research and teaching because I believe that within the diversity of perspectives that our society grows. I am the first person in my family to receive an advanced degree, and I am a first-generation college graduate. Born to a single mother, with the support of my maternal grandparents, I learned early the value of a strong education. After completing my undergraduate degree in Psychology at a historically Black college, Xavier University of Louisiana, I worked as a high school teacher at an independent school in New Orleans. I began to understand the significance of differentiating curriculum to meet the individual needs of students when I began to individualize my lessons for my students with neurodevelopmental differences and watch them thrive. Being a teacher led me to choose the Harvard Graduate School of Education to complete my master's degree to study intervention and prevention tactics for high-risk populations in schools.

My commitment to my community brought me back to my hometown of Sacramento, California to help start an elementary school. The neighborhood of the school was highly impacted by poverty. Being a product of that neighborhood myself, I knew firsthand the obstacles that children faced and the dearth of quality public education choices that were available. I was determined to be a part of the solution through setting up a research-based parent engagement program designed to allow parents to become co-facilitators of learning. Within five years I successfully implemented the program which produced a 98% involvement rate and watched each child meet and exceed grade level standards. My resolve to make change heightened once we received my youngest child's diagnosis of autism at two and a half years old. After his diagnosis, I became a passionate advocate for families because I experienced how isolating and challenging it was to navigate an ASD diagnosis which has influenced my work to this day.

If I am selected for the Emerging Leaders AUCD Board my vision for my position will be to use this opportunity to collaborate with disability leaders and further develop my leadership skills. Being connected to the many established professors, researchers,

activist, and policy experts that are associated with the AUCD Board and leadership team is an invaluable opportunity for me to further my goals of establishing my scholarship and activism within the disability community. I also believe that I have much to give to the Board and believe that my intersectional lens of being a professional, individual with a disability, and a family member of individuals with disabilities will allow me to make connections and give other perspectives that could enhance the current Board mission.

What I would like to accomplish on the Board

My first experience with the AUCD network was as a 2015 graduate of the UCEDD Leadership Institute. It was there I met three current AUCD Board leaders whom have come to be cherished mentors and friends, Andy Imparato, Sachin Pavithran, and Derrick Willis. In my five years being a part of the AUCD network I have grown to look forward to all opportunities to work with network colleagues. This network has an abundance of talented and committed individuals who are devoted to doing the work that supports advancing practices that improve the health, education, social, and economic well-being of people with disabilities.

I realize I have so much to learn, therefore if I have the honor of being selected to serve on the AUCD Board I hope to accomplish the following as an Emerging Leader Board member. I desire to become more acquainted with the current councils and initiatives such as the Multicultural Council Committee (MCC) and Council on Leadership and Advocacy (COLA) and continue to create and build relationships with council members to work toward carrying out our objectives. I consider myself a team player and will work to develop the programs and projects that the AUCD Board deems will build our network to be more inclusive and equitable for all people with disabilities and developmental disabilities.

Impacting policy to provide strength-based approaches for supporting inclusion and equity programs for people with disabilities both nationally and internationally is a goal that I have. I am interested in the possibility of international outreach with countries in the African continent that are building infrastructure to support and include children with developmental disabilities. In April 2019, I presented at the Pan-African Congress on Autism in Nairobi, Kenya. In 2020, I will return to Kenya to work with the African Population Health and Research Center as an NIH Global Alliance for Training in Health Equity Research (GATHER) fellow. Therefore, if selected, a goal that I would like to accomplish while on the AUCD Board is to continue to strengthen our global outreach and impact for Kenyan families of children with ASD/DD.

How I have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate leadership in the network

I have displayed leadership within the AUCD network through active participation in several AUCD activities. I have been an active participant and representative on the

COLA and the MCC, and collaborated with MCC members during 2018 AUCD conference to conduct a panel presentation of family members and professionals representing historically underserved communities. I participated in the 2018 and 2019 Autism CARES conference planning committees. During the 2019 Autism CARES conference I presented my research findings from qualitative interviews with African American mothers of children with autism at the conference as a concurrent session speaker and as well as conducted a mini keynote to frame the family perspective.

As a program coordinator for UC Davis Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (CEDD) I have worked to uphold the AUCD values in my projects. I lead a statewide videoconference that meets quarterly to focus capacity building of early intervention service providers named California Early Start Network (CESN). I also head a region wide network of AT/AAC providers named the AT Consortium that collaborates to host our regions only AT resource fair. Lastly, I have organized and facilitated projects geared to addressing the disparities in service access for communities of color such as our parent support group for Black families of children with disabilities, Sankofa. I was on the team that wrote a grant to secured funding from the Department Developmental Services (DDS) Disparity Funds Program which I used to develop a video module series to promote equitable access to services for families of African American and Latinx children with developmental disabilities in California.