

## GOVERNING BOARD

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Counseling and Consultation Service  
The Ohio State University  
614-292-5766  
[sharma.369@osu.edu](mailto:sharma.369@osu.edu)

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*President-Elect, 2016-2017*  
Counseling Services  
University at Buffalo  
716-645-2720  
[smitch@buffalo.edu](mailto:smitch@buffalo.edu)

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Counseling Services  
Whitworth University  
509-777-4216  
[mwhitlock@whitworth.edu](mailto:mwhitlock@whitworth.edu)

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*Past Treasurer, 2016-2017*  
University Counseling Center  
Colorado State University  
970-980-8779  
[charles.davidshofer@colostate.edu](mailto:charles.davidshofer@colostate.edu)

**Peter LeViness, Ph.D.,**  
*Survey Coordinator, 2017-2019*  
Counseling and Psychological Services  
University of Richmond  
804-289-8119  
[plevines@richmond.edu](mailto:plevines@richmond.edu)

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*Secretary, 2015-2018*  
Counseling and Psychological Services  
Duke University  
919-660-1001  
[danielle.oakley@duke.edu](mailto:danielle.oakley@duke.edu)

**Mary Chandler Bolin, Ph.D.**  
*Board Member, 2014-2017*  
University of Kentucky Counseling Center  
University of Kentucky  
859-257-8701  
[marvchandler.bolin@uky.edu](mailto:marvchandler.bolin@uky.edu)

**Wanda Collins, Ph.D.**  
*Board Member, 2016 - 2019*  
Counseling & Psychological Services  
Emory University  
404-727-7450  
[wanda.collins@emory.edu](mailto:wanda.collins@emory.edu)

**John H. Dunkle, Ph.D.**  
*Board Member, 2015-2018*  
Counseling and Psychological Services  
Northwestern University  
847-491-2151  
[j-dunkle@northwestern.edu](mailto:j-dunkle@northwestern.edu)

**Patti J. Fleck, Ph.D.**  
*Board Member, 2016-2019*  
Counseling, Disability Support, & Student Wellness  
Missouri University of Science and Technology  
573-341-4211  
[pfleck@mst.edu](mailto:pfleck@mst.edu)

**Barry A. Schreier, Ph.D.**  
*Board Member, 2016-2019*  
University Counseling Service  
University of Iowa  
319.335.2794  
[barry-schreier@uiowa.edu](mailto:barry-schreier@uiowa.edu)

**David Spano, Ph.D.**  
*Board Member, 2014-2017*  
Counseling and Psychological Services  
University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
704-687-0311  
[david.spano@uncc.edu](mailto:david.spano@uncc.edu)

**Sue Stock, Ph.D.**  
*Board Member, 2015-2018*  
Student Health and Counseling Services  
Northeastern Illinois University  
773-442-4650  
[s-stock1@neiu.edu](mailto:s-stock1@neiu.edu)



## AUCCCD Statement on Violence in Charlottesville, VA

The Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD), a professional association for the higher education leaders for college student mental health representing over 800 institutions in the United States and internationally, seeks to advance the cause of collegiate mental health through innovation, education, and advocacy. As an organization committed to inclusive excellence and the promotion of social justice, AUCCCD strongly speaks out against racism, discrimination, oppression, and violence in its many forms. On Friday, August 11, 2017, and Saturday, August 12, 2017, several White supremacist hate groups gathered on the campus of the University of Virginia and elsewhere in Charlottesville, purportedly to protest the removal of a Confederate general's statue. The weekend was marked with violent clashes between various hate groups and anti-racism groups, leading to property destruction and the needless death of a young woman who was there to protest against racism and bear witness. Several other people were injured, some seriously. Two law enforcement officers who were there to keep the peace also lost their lives when their helicopter crashed.

As college mental health professionals, we have long known that hatred and bigotry and the perpetration of racial and bias-motivated violence are harmful to EVERYONE'S mental and physical health, including those who espouse it and those who are hurt by it. AUCCCD condemns language and behaviors that aim to harm and divide people. We also view college mental health professionals as having a responsibility to facilitate greater self-understanding, value individual and group differences, encourage and model respectful dialogue, and support the right of all people to live in communities that are safe and promote emotional well-being. As the University of Virginia and college campuses all over the country prepare for the start of a new academic year that is filled with much promise, there is much work to be done. The provision of counseling or therapy in the aftermath of harm is but one service that we provide to our campuses. We also must be educators, role models, and advocates who seek to create healthy learning and living environments that reflect the diversity of our campuses and our society and who seek to eliminate the harm that comes from hatred and violence.

Association for University and College Counseling Centers Governing Board  
August 14, 2017

**Website: [www.aucccd.org](http://www.aucccd.org)**