

# 2026 CSWE Election: Candidate Statement

## Michael J. Alicea, EdD, MSW, MA

*Undergraduate Program Representative – CSWE National Nominating Committee*

I am honored to be considered a nominee for the position of Undergraduate Program Representative to the national committee of the Council on Social Work Education. Throughout my career, I have remained deeply committed to strengthening social work education, supporting undergraduate students, and advancing the core values that guide our profession—service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, and the importance of human relationships.

I currently serve as an Assistant Professor and Interim BSW Program Director at Barry University's School of Mental Health and Social Work. In this role, I work closely with students, faculty, and community partners to ensure that our undergraduate program remains academically rigorous, responsive to community needs, and grounded in the mission and values of social work. My responsibilities include curriculum development, program assessment, student mentoring, and participation in accreditation processes, all of which have reinforced my appreciation for the vital role BSW programs play in preparing future practitioners.

My commitment to the profession also extends beyond the university. I currently serve as Chapter President of the National Association of Social Workers, Florida Chapter (NASW-FL), and as a member of the Executive Board of NASW in Washington, D.C., where I serve on the Political Action for Candidate Election (PACE) Committee. These roles have strengthened my understanding of policy, advocacy, and the evolving needs of the social work workforce, and they continue to inform my perspective on social work education and leadership.

Prior to entering academia, I served honorably in the United States military during the Gulf War Theater of Operations and subsequently spent forty years in law enforcement. These experiences shaped my commitment to public service and provide a practical perspective that informs my teaching, particularly in helping students connect theory, research, and practice in meaningful ways.

Undergraduate social work education is often students' first formal entry into the profession. At this stage, they begin to develop professional identity, ethical reasoning, and an understanding of the structural conditions that affect the individuals, families, and communities we serve. If selected to serve as Undergraduate Program Representative, I would bring a collaborative and collegial approach, committed to listening to and representing the perspectives of educators across diverse institutional settings, promoting

student success, and supporting initiatives that strengthen field education, inclusive pedagogy, and faculty development.