

# 2026 CSWE Election: Candidate Statement

## Tonya E. Perry, PhD, MSW

*Graduate Program Representative (Dean/Director) – CSWE Board of Directors*

We are at a critical juncture in social work education and in the life of CSWE. I am confident that CSWE is poised to meet the challenges we face with a strategic focus on sound fiscal operations, reimagined possibilities and responsiveness to our members. I am honored to have been nominated to continue my service on the Board of Directors (BOD) as a Graduate Program Representative. My connection with CSWE began when I was a doctoral student and MFP Fellow. I have been an active member of CSWE for nearly 3 decades during which time I served 2 terms on the Women's Council and completed 2 terms on the National Nominating Committee (NNC). I am currently completing a term on the BOD as an Undergraduate Program Representative and member of the Executive Committee. Over the years and in collaboration with a diversity of colleagues from various programs and institutions, I have had the privilege of making lasting contributions to social work education; yet, there is much more work that remains. As a womanist scholar, and seasoned social work educator and administrator, I am running for a second term on the BOD because I care very deeply about our profession and its future and I want to continue to contribute my voice, my lived experiences, knowledge, expertise, and skills toward advancing CSWE's mission. As the geopolitical landscape threatens our profession and the future of graduate social work education, I would value the opportunity to continue to represent our programs in preparing the next generation of practitioners, scholars, and educators.

I am Professor and Chair of the Department of Social Work at Alabama A & M University (AAMU). Having previously taught at Fordham University and Howard University, I have been a graduate program educator and administrator for nearly 28 years. As a seasoned graduate program educator, I have had the privilege of serving at AAMU as College of Education, Humanities and Behavioral Sciences (CEHBS) Associate Dean for Student Success as well as Interim Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate Studies. Additionally, I possess a number of skills and attributes that will support my role as Graduate Program Representative. I am a million-dollar grant writer with skills in curriculum design, program development, mentoring and leadership development. I am analytical, empathic, compassionate, and an intuitive listener, problem-solver, and consensus builder. My vision for CSWE is that we will meet the current challenges we face strategically and driven by the core values of our profession. Armed with a future orientation and an urgent sense of intentionality concerning the integration of technology, population trends, globalization, and the impact of macro forces on educational policies and standards, we will continue to advance social work education. In so doing, we will ensure that the intersectional realities of our students, colleagues and client populations are at the very center of our work to achieve excellence in social work education and research. I welcome the opportunity to serve the CSWE membership as a Graduate Program Representative.