

2026 CSWE Election: Candidate Statement

April Christman MSW, LCSW, CCTP

Undergraduate Faculty Representative – CSWE Board of Directors

I am eager to serve as the Undergraduate Faculty Representative on the Board of Directors because I am deeply committed to ensuring that the BSW degree remains a rigorous, high-quality, and ethically responsive entry point into the social work profession. As an Assistant Professor and Field Education Coordinator at Virginia Wesleyan University, I witness daily the transformative power of undergraduate education. However, I also recognize the increasing complexities facing our programs, from evolving accreditation demands to the integration of emerging technologies. I hope to provide a voice that balances academic excellence with the practical, regulatory, and fiscal realities of program management. I want to contribute to the national leadership that ensures CSWE remains a vital support system for the educators and students who are the future of our profession.

I bring a multifaceted skill set that bridges clinical expertise, administrative governance, and accreditation experience. My qualifications for fiduciary oversight are grounded in my prior tenure as a Director of Counseling and Student Health, where I was responsible for budget management, clinical staff supervision, and comprehensive policy development. As Director, I implemented practice approaches and policies that resulted in a 68% reduction in suicidal crises among clients receiving services from the practice.

I possess a deep, hands-on command of accreditation standards. Having assisted with our BSW program's 2018 reaffirmation and currently leading the drafting of our 2026 Self-Study, I understand the nuances of the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. Furthermore, I have proven my capacity for strategic planning through measurable outcomes. By integrating our Community Advisory Board feedback, I spearheaded a field education overhaul that increased minimum internship hours from 405 to 448, implemented mandatory simulated practice, increased high-impact cognitive and affective processing assignments with weekly process recordings, and created a new, for-credit internship preparation course. This strategic vision resulted in a 100% placement rate for our 2025 graduating cohort into their preferred graduate programs or employment. Finally, my background as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and clinical supervisor ensures my governance decisions remain ethically grounded in contemporary practice.

My vision for CSWE is to foster a proactive governing body that prioritizes a deep commitment to ethical practice and the development of highly competent practitioners. I believe CSWE must lead the charge in upholding field education as the signature pedagogy of our profession, ensuring that programs are providing students with high-quality, immersive learning experiences.

I envision a social work education landscape where CSWE empowers programs to provide students with the practical knowledge necessary to effectively serve and advocate for vulnerable populations. We must strive for a curriculum that is both academically rigorous and nimble enough to respond to societal shifts, including the ethical implications of artificial intelligence. Ultimately, I envision a CSWE that ensures our professional standards remain the global gold standard, producing generalist practitioners who are exceptionally prepared to meet the needs of a diverse and changing world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "April Christman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line underneath it.

April Christman, MSW, LCSW, CCTP