Melanie A. White

NACOLE CANDIDATE ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

NACOLE CANDIDATE ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE Candidates are encouraged to fill out the following questionnaire, to give NACOLE members relevant information when voting for Board members.

Name: Melanie A. White

1) Position Sought: Member-At-Large

2) Geographic Location: Mid-West Region

3) Current Oversight Position and Organization: Interim Secretary to the Board/Executive Manager of Policy – Detroit Board of Police Commissioners

4) Number of Years as a NACOLE Member: At least 5 years

5) Please list Annual Conferences or training opportunities in which you have attended: NACOLE Annual Conference 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021

6) Are you currently a member of the NACOLE Board? No

If yes, please If so, in what capacity: ____ President ____ Vice President ____ Board Member At-Large

For the following questions, please respond in no more than 200 words.

1) Why do you want to serve on the NACOLE Board?

If elected to the NACOLE Board, it would be an honor and a privilege to serve. Serving on the NACOLE Board would truly be a worthwhile endeavor. Having received the BOPC’s endorsement for nomination for the seat on the NACOLE Board, I would have the unique opportunity to represent the Board allowing NACOLE practitioners and members access to historical and diverse experience, knowledge, and wisdom in the civil rights, civilian oversight and public safety arenas. In addition to my specific knowledge and experience, I would help advance NACOLE’s mission of bringing 21st Century resources, tools, best practices, and lessons learned to benefit others toward developing and sustaining an effective and efficient civilian oversight agency of law enforcement.

Through its civilian oversight of law enforcement services, training, and resources, NACOLE has been a catalyst for change across the country toward ensuring legitimate, constitutional, and safe policing. In the same way as NACOLE, I too am committed to improving the community, ensuring safe and legitimate policing, and providing greater access to education and resources in the field of oversight and public safety. If elected as Board Member at Large, through my experience, skillset, and knowledge, I am looking forward to contributing to NACOLE’s longstanding commitment of helping to provide
transparency and accountability in law enforcement and holding law enforcement accountable across the country. In order to see change across the country and expand our education and outreach efforts, I am committed to being a part of that change and making substantial contributions that facilitate meaningful, impactful change in the law enforcement and civilian oversight community.

2) What skills/experience/qualities do you bring to the NACOLE Board?

Having a strong work ethic and a willingness to go the extra mile to help the organizations in which I work and volunteer allows me to bring quality, effectiveness, and sincerity to the NACOLE Board. I am a dedicated, committed, motivated, and experienced practitioner and professional who has worked with stakeholders from all backgrounds, experiences, and expertise. I find working in the field of civilian oversight and public safety truly rewarding and appreciate any opportunity that allow us to make systemic change for the benefit of our communities, our families, and generations to come. NACOLE’s past conference theme, “Civilian Oversight as a Permanent Part of Public Safety” truly resonates because civilian oversight requires a daily, diligent effort. My resume, biography, and record reflect my extensive work in the field of civilian oversight of law enforcement and other related background such as administration, Board governance, legal, policy, and investigative background, and success with working with the law enforcement community and external stakeholders and much more. Please also see my biography for more information.

3) What challenges does NACOLE face as a rapidly growing membership organization?

NACOLE’s membership has grown and more civilian oversight is needed across the country. A NACOLE membership would provide value to any organization. NACOLE has done an excellent job since 1995, and it continues to do so today. Through outreach, training, and collaboration with other civic and community organizations, agencies, and stakeholders, NACOLE will continue to succeed. Additionally, ensuring that we meet the challenges and demands of the increasing organization by soliciting additional resources will serve to benefit the NACOLE Organization.

4) How have you contributed to NACOLE’s work?

Yes.
Please include all committees you have served on or led, as well as any other NACOLE volunteer efforts.

Annual Conference Planning Committee
Membership Committee
Training Committee by providing tools and resources regarding civilian oversight and criminal procedure-related matters.
5) Please share highlights of your background/experience in law enforcement oversight.

My strong work ethic has led me to positions with increased responsibilities over the last 18 years with the Board of Police Commissioners. I initially started as a Police Commission Investigator investigating alleged police misconduct and later received a promotion to the position of Senior Police Commission Investigator where I was instrumental in helping our agency achieve a 96% compliance rate during the Department of Justice (DOJ) Federal Consent Decree, helping the City to avoid a $1K per day fine. I developed a training curriculum for our organization which was used as a model training curriculum by the assigned Detroit DOJ Monitors who oversaw other law enforcement and civilian oversight agencies regarding their consent decrees mandates. Later, I received a promotion to Executive Manager of Policy and helped create and implement advanced policies on a myriad of areas that are now looked to as model policies. In this role, I am also responsible for reviewing and evaluating DPD promotions and appointments, applicant appeals for those seeking to enter the Detroit Police Department, and other Board civilian oversight initiatives and endeavors.

Currently, I serve as Interim Secretary to the Board managing the day-to-day operations for the Board which also includes overseeing the Investigative Division. Some of highlights in this regard involve developing COVID-19 policies and protocols to ensure continued access and transparency regarding the BOPC. Additionally, as a result of my experience with police misconduct investigations, Board Administration, and understanding and expertise in case management and the mediation/legal process, I along with my colleagues were instrumental in refocusing our citizen complaint investigation process, which will continue to yield much more effective and efficient civilian oversight services to our community. Lastly, one of the highlights of my career has been the ability to work with all officials and stakeholders toward the goal of “Civilian Oversight being a permanent part of Public Safety,” and our organizations have observed the fruits of those relationships and collaborations.

6) If elected/re-elected, what would you most like to accomplish as a Board member?

Please see response no. 1. Additionally, some of the key areas I am interested in are: (1) Providing greater access to Training, Mentorship, and Education for all civilian oversight agencies; (2) Developing outreach initiatives toward Recruiting, Retaining, and Reactivating NACOLE Membership for practitioners, professionals, officials, and our stakeholders on a year-round basis and providing support to practitioners and officials; and (3) Enhancing our national platform toward providing a system for accessing model policies, procedures, and governing rules that civilian oversight agencies may use as resources within their law enforcement and civilian oversight agencies.

There are many initiatives that are of interest to me at NACOLE. In my immediate interests, I am passionate about three (3) areas that I believe are crucial to NACOLE’s advocacy toward helping other civilian oversight agencies succeed and make their law enforcement agencies better:
A. *Training, Mentorship, and Education*. With one of the most historic, experienced civilian oversight agencies in the country, the Honorable Detroit Board of Police Commissioners, I have gained dynamic experience in civilian oversight of law enforcement for almost two (2) decades. Training, Mentorship, and Support is important for the civilian oversight agency and also the officials and staff who practice this work every day.

B. *Membership is key*. Recruitment, retention, and reactivation of members is important and requires a multilayered approach. To ensure NACOLE is meeting the needs of all three (3) areas, we must continue to implement a plan of action that is progressive and achievable. Through year-round training efforts, fellowship and meet-and-greet activities at the national, regional, and local levels, national media relations and outreach campaigns, and finally, training and events to enhance agencies' understanding of what NACOLE offers, we must continuously appeal to our NACOLE members. Additionally, as a way to incentivize members to stay active and engaged, we can empower and encourage our local civilian oversight agencies by providing more opportunities to serve within the organization.

C. *Access to Resources*: NACOLE Members and oversight agencies would truly benefit from accessing a general database system that stores model policies, procedures, and governing rules for law enforcement and civilian oversight agencies.

7) Additional information for voters to consider:

Vote for Melanie White who will work to ensure Leadership, Progress, and Achievement and enhance NACOLE’s longstanding commitment of accountability and transparency.