



ACADEMIC COUNCIL
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

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Dear Fellow ACUNS Members,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS), I am honored to introduce myself to you as President of ACUNS.

I have been a part of this community for over 30 years, and in that time, I have watched us grow our membership and bridge the researcher-practitioner divide across regions. Since the organization's founding in 1987, our Annual Meetings have taken us to, among others, Nairobi (2025), Tokyo (2024), Washington D.C. (2023), Geneva (2022), Stellenbosch (2019), Rome (2018), Seoul (2017) and New York (2016), reflecting our global membership and focus. Leading an organization that has been critical to my professional career is a responsibility I do not take lightly. I am stepping into this role with a deep respect for our history and an unwavering optimism for our future and the future of our field, particularly during these turbulent times.

My primary goal for my tenure is to ensure that ACUNS remains the premier home for engaging scholars and practitioners on the multilateral challenges of our day. As we move forward together, my focus will be on listening to your ideas about how we can enhance the collaboration between those of us who study international organizations, those of us who work for them, and those of us who do both. I am also eager to hear your suggestions on how we can expand the diversity of our community, enhance our relevance for international policymaking, and maximize our ability to counteract the challenges currently buffeting multilateralism.

We have had an exciting year and we plan to build on it this summer. In addition to hosting co-sponsored events on the United Nations System and a webinar series on artificial intelligence and multilateralism, ACUNS will soon hold its main flagship events: the 2026 ACUNS Annual Workshop in Almaty, Kazakhstan, 21st-28th of June; and the 2026 ACUNS Annual Meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, the 1st-3rd of July. I look forward to seeing familiar faces and meeting new members then.

Thank you for your continued dedication to and engagement with ACUNS.

Courtney B. Smith