



CELEBRATING
55 YEARS

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Cochran named interim executive director at ACE Mentor

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Reed Cochran

Boston, MA According to ACE Mentor Program of Greater Boston, Reed Cochran will step into the role of interim executive director while ACE conducts a search for its next permanent E.D. After four years serving as executive director, Jen Fries has decided to leave her role to pursue other opportunities.

Cochran is a practiced nonprofit executive who specializes in leadership transitions. She takes pride in piloting agencies “from here to there” in an ordered fashion, keeping operations humming while the board stays strategically focused. Her engagements include Somerville’s Door2Door Transportation, The Children’s Museum of Memphis and Ballet Memphis. In prior endeavors, Cochran has been a high school Spanish teacher in her home state of Mississippi and a high-tech management consultant in San Francisco.

She earned a BA in history at Brown University and an MPA at the Harvard Kennedy School.

“After four years with ACE, I am pleased to be leaving the organization in a position of strength. ACE is attracting more financial and volunteer support than ever before, and as a result, we are serving more students at more after-school locations than ever,” said outgoing leader Fries. “It was particularly gratifying when we hit the milestone of more than one million dollars in scholarships awarded by ACE to our high school seniors. I know that with Reed’s leadership, the future is bright for ACE.”

ACE’s president Janine Byrne of PCA notes that during Fries’ tenure, ACE more than tripled its annual fundraising, adopted a new strategic plan, and added two new program sites. “As our first executive director, Jen’s leadership allowed ACE to create structures and systems that have allowed us to set new records for scholarships awarded, high schools reached, and students served. We are grateful to Jen for her work at ACE and wish her the best in her new endeavors.”

Through practical, project-based, hands-on explorations, ACE students work collaboratively and creatively to design innovative solutions to real world problems. With professional guidance by industry mentors who are full-time employees of construction, design and engineering firms, students develop the professionalism, teamwork, and collaboration that the industry requires. During the 15-week program, the students design a hypothetical project in order to learn about each discipline and take part in activities such as Trade Day, construction site visits, and special events with partners such as the National Organization of Minority Architects.

Each year, the project changes, exposing students to new design challenges. An audience of family, teachers, and mentors gather in March to hear the students presenting their designs at a Student Showcase. At the Student Showcase event, ACE also awards college scholarships to the seniors who plan to study in these fields, providing an average award of \$8,000 last year. In total, ACE awarded \$210,000 to the Class of 2023. Students who complete one year of ACE are also eligible to

be placed in paid summer internships within industry firms. These work experiences inform students' academic and career interests. During the summer of 2023, ACE placed 35 high school students in paid summer internships.

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