

Round 1

1. PACT often helps our members handle intensely personal and emotionally laden issues in their life and dealing with the club. Are you comfortable handling these sorts of matters for individuals you do not know well?

I have deep respect for privacy, and the need for handling issues systematically in order to create a safe environment. To that end, I am comfortable with listening to peoples' concerns and feelings, including when they regard uncomfortable topics. By lending a willing ear, I think that PACT has the ability to guide people towards resolution processes which both protect them in the near term and help to create a safer long term environment. I am comfortable to take this on for both people I am familiar with and people I have never met before, in this role and generally in my life.

2. What if any previous experience do you have that you feel helps prepare you for this aspect of the role?

Personal and emotional safety are very important topics to me. Part of feeling safe to express oneself is feeling validated. In both my personal and professional lives, I have worked to learn how to help people feel that their feelings are valid, and how to express them in a productive and meaningful way. I have taken on this role in advocating for new arrivals to the US, and also in my work as a Human Right Commissioner.

A complicated part of this question has to do with the identities that people hold as really important. One of the most important experiences I have had has been in learning to assess which, if any, identities are coming into play or conflict in a grievance or concern. I have often found that the people who participate in my research do not have active knowledge about what feels targeted or not right about the way they've been treated. While this isn't generizable by any means, it informs how I interview people academically, and therefore how I communicate in a therapeutic way also.

3. Part of PACTs role is to be able to provide the Board of Director's with feedback and observations about current problems in the club or about possible improvements or general membership temperature checks. This generally requires being pretty strongly engaged with the membership whether through travel or our lists or facebook groups. How are you engaged with the membership and how strongly?

I came back to the club after a long hiatus in 2015. Since then I have worked to rebuild friendships I made before my break, and connect with the game and club in a larger way. I actively participate in the lists, and work to network and meet new people when I travel to non-local and convention events. I participate in global play, and I am also an aRST. Both of these things cause me to travel as much as I can afford as a grad student. I also charge myself with trying to build characters who bring people together in order to create IC communities.

A good example of my innate drive to make ooc connections is how I came to make the decision to enter this election: I had only briefly considered myself as an adequate candidate when I sat down with Teresa, a member I had never met before and current PACT member, we discussed a number of things including my research and the PACT position, and after that conversation, I realized that I, though my experiences and training could be a good resource in the role.

4. What changes if any would you make to the office if you could?

The single largest change I would like to see made in this office is the how, and how often, it is advertised and publicized within the Club. The position is one that can help all of our members by educating our club on sensitive and important topics, and also to assist members who are having problematic or even just uncomfortable interactions. Even with those, in my opinion, critical charges, the majority of the people in the club who I have spoken with did not know the basics of PACT.

5. Do you have any projects or programs you would like to develop in the first 12 months?

I would like to work with the Communities Manager to create groups which empower our members who are members of gender, racial, sexuality, and other minorities. Creating tools for our members to network based on their shared experiences will allow us, as a club, to hear their collective voices and respond more quickly to their needs.

Round 2

1. It's the duty of PACT Members to be available to listen to and advise on matters of great personal and emotional distress. Have there been times that issues within the club have caused you great distress personally? How did you handle those issues? If you take this position, how will you handle the stress and distress it may cause you?

My biggest trepidation in taking on this role is the fact that I feel, deeply. I create characters that are real and deep and I method act the crap out of them. That means that there have been moments like Space at MESCon a few weeks ago where I was crying real tears while engaged in an awesome scene as an NPC that I wouldn't trade for the world. Part of the reason I think I'd be good at this role is because I feel so deeply. When someone is hurting I can call on how I'd be hurting, when someone is afraid, I am able to think back on times that I was terrified for my life, and know how hard it is to reach out and ask for help.

All that said, yes, there have been a number of occasions where things happening in the club, or with members of the club have caused me distress, at times very serious distress. One of the things that I have struggled with my whole life is how not to set aside my emotions when I need to help someone else, and I am admittedly still learning to ask for help myself for that reason. I'm learning more and more how to reach out productively, and without causing people around me to feel overly concerned about me. In the end, I have been through some horrific things, and my inner monologue is sometimes pretty nasty to me. I am very fortunate to have so many amazing people around me to help me pull out of the fog when it comes, many of whom I met in our club. When those demons rear their heads my best friends are there for me, and I'm working on reaching out before I need them.

PACT is such a wonderful resource for exactly the reasons my friends are wonderful. When something happens in our club, or even adjacent to our club, and it causes a person to feel any amount of distress, PACT can be a sounding board and a compassionate ear which allows people to feel heard and to help create strategies for them to remediate the problems that caused the distress. I have been trained in DBT and CBT strategies a number of times in my life and I will continue to use and improve those techniques both to better help myself endure any emotional or mental turmoil that comes from my work in this role,

and also to help our fellow members make decisions and take actions which help them feel safe and comfortable in our community

2. Part of the PACT teams role is: "Listens and understands issues while remaining neutral with respect to the facts." How would you approach representing a member's concern that you personally disagree with?

All of our members deserve to have an expectation of safety and inclusion in our club. I believe that firmly. There are a number of members who I may have philosophical differences with, and even some I would not choose to be friends with, but as long as they are not taking actions to comprise the safety of another member, I am going to speak with them as an impartial person. I will let them tell me their concerns, their stories, and I will actively work with them to find a resolution based on their values and needs. Research is an everyday part of my life and I will happily put in the legwork to understand viewpoints that differ from mine, and I will bring my ethnographic training to bear in order to engage with those views in order to make sure that all of our members are validated.

3. Much of the club interacts through text. How would you approach an officer or player that appears rude or defensive?

When there are no non-verbal cues to read, it can be easy to read intent into a message. I think that it is important to engage with the person in a way which is not hostile or accusational. Text based communication is not always plain though and I would be more than willing to talk to a person on the phone, or on video chat in order to help clarify what was going on in the situation. If I, as a PACT member, can help that person to revise the type of language they use in order to better convey their intention or avoid misunderstandings. These conversation must be approached in a calm and unbiased way in order to ensure that we are best able to maintain the civility of our club and the safety of our members.

Round 3

1. What approaches might you take to reach members or domains not active on the lists to raise awareness of the office?

Communication can be a huge hurdle in our club. We as a membership range from being active on lists on a daily basis, to members for whom live games are the only participation they are interested in. One of the things that I see as potentially an effective method to communicate with folks who aren't on the national lists is to communicate with local coordinators in order to send things to local lists or Facebook pages. That said, I think it is important to respect that some members do not have interest in club activities between games and are purposefully not active on club communication channels. In the instance that I need to contact a member in pursuit of my duties, I will work with their local DC in order to figure out the best way to get, and stay, in contact with them.

2. How should PACT office engage with social media?

I would like to see PACT work with the Communities Manager in order to create and manage Facebook groups for communities in our club to network. This will help us to help them with any kinds of issues that they, as a potentially marginalized community, see as important or concerning.

Also, I anticipate that as our club continues to grow into using more social media for our regular communication and organization, we will need to continue accessing our social media policy and if chosen for PACT, I will be happy to assist the BoD in that process.

3. Where do you draw the line between "venting" and harassment?

I generally take three factors into consideration: the subject of the comment, the audience who can hear it, and whether or not it is obviously referencing an individual in a negative way.

The subject of the message is very important. If it is not about the person making it, or the way that they feel about something, it is far more likely to be harassment.

The audience matters as well. If the comments are made in front of a large group or the person who is causing the frustration or concern, then it is more likely to feel like harassment to other members or witnesses. This includes both in person and on social media.

Finally, if the message or comment is targeting an individual or group, either directly or indirectly then I see it as harassment. I want to further clarify that a subpost or vaguebook can be targeting even if it doesn't directly mention the person who feels harassed by it.

4. The WoD is a complex setting full of dark and adult themes. Many 'dark' themes can result in triggering issues or concern for members. How might you advise an ST who wants to incorporate dark themes in a considerate and thoughtful manner?

There are two things that I would advocate for to STs. Firstly, I think it is very important to let players know when they are entering into a scene or plotline that has a higher darkness factor. This will allow the players to buy into the type of play rather than having it imposed upon them. The second technique I would suggest is the OK-Check In system referenced in the next question. This will allow players to opt into the scene or plot without giving up the ability to later realize that the specific style or RP may not be something they are comfortable with or willing to engage in.

5. Have you had the opportunity to get familiar with or use the [OK-Check In](#) system? Do you think this is an effective tool to help manage player comfort during RP? Why or why not?

My home domain implemented this system last year and I think it has worked great for us. There are a number of us that are relatively intense RPer's and it has allowed us set clear boundaries around when something is okay to continue in those intense scenes. I have seen it used at a couple of other games also, and I'd be very interested in hearing other people's' feedback on it. In time, if it is found effective, I would like to see it enshrined in our club docs as a sort of IC/OOC club house rule in order to help give

people another tool manage their emotional capacity and wellbeing at club events. I think it has some potential value even in non-RP situations in order to allow us, as members, to look out for distress in each other.

6. What specific challenges do you believe the membership and the club faces at present in relation to the role you would be asked to occupy as PACT? What would a potential plan of action to address those challenges look like if you were elected?

The largest challenge that I see to us as a club is the way that groups of players come to feel alienated from the club, and our community. I have seen more than one event result in an exodus of members from our club. That is something that concerns me as someone running for PACT. When one member feels out of phase with the club, they may choose to not renew or to go to another org, or perhaps to stop LARPing altogether, but when a group of people have gotten to the point where they feel that their differences with the club are so irreconcilable that they have to, as a group, leave the club, that seems to be a systemic failure.

Round 4

1. Conventions are a prime opportunity for our membership to come together on a large scale. How active are you at conventions? If elected, how active do you intend to be?

For me, access to convention events has always felt like a barrier to entry for getting involved in offices or assistant positions at the National level. I see a question like this in pretty much every larger-than-local election, and I understand it, but at the same time I don't think that how many non-local conventions a person can attend ought to be a prerequisite for service to our club.

With that out of the way, I will say that I do attend as many conventions as I am able to because I have friends in the club from all around the country and I love to be able to see them as often as possible. I have gone to two of the three MESCons that have happened since I became active again, rather than just tacitly a member without a game to play in. The one that I missed was within a few weeks of coming back from studying in London, and the logistics weren't possible for me. I have also been active, as both a player and an ST, in the regional showcases that have happened in my region and the regions around mine.

If chosen for this position I will be continuing the way that I prioritize convention attendance. I will be making both MESCons that will take place during my term, unless a life event prevents me from doing so, and I'm willing to say that I will find a way to attend at-least one non-local Regional Convention per year also. Those are things I will be doing regardless of the outcome of this election, but they would become more important if I were chosen for this role.

2. How familiar with you with our national offices (NC, NST, NCA, Standards, etc) and how they function?

I am familiar with the roles of the National offices. I have poured over time and time again how they work, and what I could do to help. I have considered applying for 'a' positions at the National level a number of times as I implied in my previous answer. I am not particularly familiar with the people who hold all of those offices, but I am very comfortable with making new connections and getting to know them in order to help advocate for our membership, even when it is a person I have not met before.

3. Which National Offices do you anticipate working with the most on a proactive (rather than responsive) level?

I expect that I would find myself approaching three parts of our club's national leadership proactively. Firstly, one of my visions is to work with the Communities manager to create networking and communication methods for marginalized and disadvantaged communities within our club. Secondly, I suspect that as our world evolves, PACT will need to work with the NC in order to get out ahead of potential issues which could come from the outside world into our club. Lastly, I suspect that the NSTs team will be the third National staff that I would reach out to proactively in order to address potential concerns that have come out of plotlines or ST actions all through the chain.

Round 5

1. PACT is often called on to work with and represent protected classes in our org. Given that, knowing your own privilege and preparing for how it could affect the members you're advocating for is crucial. What are your privileges and what efforts will you take to be an ally to members who don't have them?

This question is tough because it requires a person to willingly out themselves about any and all possible things that might otherwise appear to the outside observer or unfamiliar person to be a privileged position in society. Being an ally is very important and asking someone how they will work to be an ally to people who are members of groups that they are not a part of, is a perfectly valid question, however, I do not think that it is okay to ask a person to out themselves if they do not present as an obvious member of an underprivileged group. I will do my best to acknowledge the things that are definitely privileges of mine and reveal some of the things that are not. To that end however, I need to look out for my own health and comfort, in the same way I would advocate for another member as a PACT rep. If someone would like some further explanation of anything I say, I'd be happy to talk about the issues or my experiences in private, but in the end, I disagree that anyone is entitled to know anyone's private thoughts or history.

Let me start this by stating who I am, when I consider myself as a composite of my identities: I am a white nonbinary(they/them) queer who constantly grapples with wishing they were able to actually show up and be a part of the trans community. I present masculinely because I am tall and muscular and I have to do whatever it takes to pay my bills and survive, which means denying what I'm feeling in order to keep my

job and position at school. I am a panromantic asexual who is a survivor of a number of things - I will not be elaborating on this because I refuse to engage in any form of one upmanship in regards to trauma. I am the only child of a single teenage mother and I was raised in low-income housing and public school in the northeast of the US. I have been homeless on more than one occasion, and I have had to walk away from everyone in my family other than my mother. I am a first-generation student, and I am lucky enough to be a graduate student. I am mostly able-bodied, and the long term physical conditions that I have are both not apparent and not debilitating to my ability to work. I do, however, have a few mental health illnesses that have come close to removing me from the work force, and I have had to be very realistic about my capabilities and work very hard to keep them from doing that. Finally, I am very fortunate to live in a place where, generally speaking, I am able to embrace all of the things that I am, and all of the things that people like me get targeted for in other places.

All of that said: I march with Black Lives Matter and work with the Movement for Black Lives; I stand up with women in order to help them take power that has been taken from them. I have dedicated my future to helping people who came to the US as refugees, and I will be continuing to study immigration law in order to help all people with immigration concerns to advocate for themselves. I have stood between people of color and riot police. I have placed myself in harms way to combat racism and antisemitism. I have had ribs broken by riot control ordinance. I have spent nights in a cell. I am a trained 'riot' medic. I do all of this because when a stranger, a police officer, a white supremacist, or anyone else who wishes to perpetrate violence upon a disadvantaged person, looks at me they do not see a liberal enby who wears a full face of makeup to go out; they don't see a person who constantly has to struggle to keep up with peers who are better connected and have a safety net; They see a 6'5" white masculine presenting person who is mildly athletic and looks like them. My comfort, my safety, my happiness, means almost nothing as long as people feel like they don't have the ability to advocate for themselves in a safe manner.

As an ally for any of those groups I'm not a part of, even the ones I wish I was allowed to be, it is important that I take a backseat to the concerns of the people I want to support. Use your privilege in a way that makes them feel empowered and safe, to help them make their voice heard, to let them live a life that is true to themselves. Being that selfless isn't easy, and I'm not perfect. I will do my best, regardless of the outcome of this election, to continue to lift up people who have been stepped on, not because I feel like I need to save them, but because I hope that someday they will be able to feel safe and equal in their identities.

2. Bleed, the spill over of emotions between the character and the player in either direction, can be the cause of or exacerbate player conflicts. How do you identify when bleed is occurring? What steps might you take to assist a member struggling with bleed?

The first step I take in trying to figure out whether or not a situation is being caused by, or is being exacerbated by, bleed is to ask the person to explain to me how they are feeling. Oftentimes bleed manifests as feeling targeted and singled out by someone. Other times it can be a general sense of being disliked. In the event that a person seems to be, or explicitly expresses, distress from bleed I would ask both parties to take a day to not communicate, to think about how they are feeling and to cool off. After that I would try to work with both parties in order to facilitate a conversation between them. This conversation would likely need to be moderated, and I would fulfill that role in order to make it a productive conversation where both parties feel heard, but no attacks or active hostility can be used to take over the conversation.

One other thing that I would like to note about bleed is that while I will happily lend an ear to any concerns or distress that a member is having, ongoing long-term issues with Bleed or serious distress caused by game or the interpersonal interactions that take place at or around it, may be something that a member should seek a professional for assistance with. I have a lot of knowledge of mental health treatment, and techniques to help someone stabilize enough to work through distress, and I am more than willing to be their advocate, but I am not a licensed mental health practitioner, and I would be very wary of being involved in a situation that felt less like advocacy and more like therapy, only because I want to help, and I'm not specifically trained in how to treat mental health concerns beyond crisis intervention, and interpersonal communication.