Candidate Name

Kira Nurieli PCC (Professional Certified Coach)

Candidate Title

CEO & Ombuds

Organization

HARMONY STRATEGIES INC

Candidate Statement

As a longtime volunteer and active member of IOA, I consider this community near and dear to my heart. Over the years, I have considered ways to better support IOA grow and flourish; serving on the Board of Directors would be a way to dedicate my time and attentions in a meaningful way. It would be an honor to help shape the IOA of the future, including opening up critical and rich conversations about who ombuds are, what we do, and how we do it with excellence and professionalism.

Pathway to the Profession

Remote, virtual, and contract/fractional ombuds have been presenting new and emerging challenges to what had been historically considered best-practices in our work. Since the COVID pandemic, it's been clear that much of the work of an Ombuds can be supported in novel and creative ways, and IOA is well-positioned to define what best-practices mean, in light of the new players and opportunities. As someone who has been a leader at the forefront of ombuds as a contracted partner to multiple organizations, I can readily give voice to some of the critical opportunities and challenges that this model brings to our field.

IOA Values

I believe meaningful engagement begins with Dignity, which means ensuring all members feel seen, heard, respected, and meaningfully considered in all IOA events, decisions, and structures. For IOA, this means building systems that foster healthy dialogue, open communication channels, and increase clarity and transparency for members across identities, cultures, sectors, geographic regions, and career stages. Members should understand how decisions are made, how they can contribute, where to bring questions and concerns, and how their feedback influences the Association’s direction. I believe in the principle popularized by BrenÃ© Brown that “clear is kind”: ambiguity and limited communication can unintentionally leave members feeling excluded, uncertain, or undervalued, while clarity communicates respect and builds trust. Through intentional opportunities for dialogue, accessible pathways to participation, and consistent communication, the Board can create an environment where differences are welcomed, emerging and innovative talent has a genuine voice, and members experience tangible value from their involvement.

Volunteer or Leadership Experience

With 25 years of mediation and dispute resolution experience, including organizational ombuds roles, and a master’s degree in organizational psychology, I understand both the practical realities of ombuds

work and the organizational structures needed to support its effectiveness. Within IOA, I have dedicated myself to volunteer service, including my work on the Professional Development Committee, launching the Jewish Ombuds Group, presenting at conferences, and co-authoring the corporate ombuds chapter in the IOA book Fundamentals, Foundations, and Future. I have also established ombuds offices for multiple organizations in alignment with IOA Standards and worked across government, higher education, research institutions, and nonprofits. These experiences have prepared me to contribute a strategic, collaborative, and member-centered perspective to Board governance. I am particularly committed to strengthening the Association's ability to engage its diverse membership, communicate clearly and transparently, and create meaningful opportunities for emerging talent to contribute to the profession's future.

Professional Expertise

As the CEO and owner of Harmony Strategies Group, a women-owned small business, I bring hands-on experience across virtually every aspect of running and growing an organization, including business development, revenue generation, strategic partnerships, marketing, client relations, service delivery, financial decision-making, and long-term strategic planning. Building a successful dispute resolution firm has required me to identify opportunities, cultivate relationships, communicate value to diverse audiences, and develop sustainable approaches to growth. I would bring this entrepreneurial perspective to the IOA Board, particularly in exploring partnerships, expanding the Association's reach and visibility, and identifying opportunities to strengthen member engagement and diversify revenue streams. I am especially interested in connecting these capabilities with my commitment to professional development, ensuring that IOA's strategic growth creates meaningful value for members at every career stage and supports the professionalism of our field.

Candidate Bio

Over the past six years, I have established 6 Ombuds offices in small, non-profit and mission-driven organizations, where I have served as either the solo ombuds or the lead ombuds for a team and handled everything from writing charters to developing outreach materials to presenting reports and critical insights to decision makers.

My background in alternative dispute resolution began over 20 years ago when I began consulting small nonprofit organizations and led trainings in conflict management/transformation for leaders and teams. Over the years, I have been both a volunteer and paid mediator and am currently on the NYC Family Court panel for Custody & Visitation. Whether as ombuds, restorative practices facilitator (circle keeper), conflict coach, or trainer, I apply my background in anthropology and organizational psychology to embrace a transformative approach to dispute resolution.

Past and current clients include: US Fish & Wildlife Service, FDIC, MacArthur Foundation, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Millennium Challenge Corporation, Progyny, Inc., Liberty Partnerships Program, the Board of Cooperative Educational Services of New York, Hunger Free Vermont, Community Health Connections, Union of Concerned Scientists, and CIMMYT.