

# 2023 Candidate Statement – Candidate for Speaker



Bill McGehee, PT, PhD

**Question:** What is the role of the speaker within the House of Delegates and Board of Directors to ensure advancement of the profession and the strategic plan?

**Response:**

The bylaws outline the role of the Speaker as follows: The Speaker shall oversee the year-long activities of the House and shall preside at meetings of the House, be an ex officio member of the Reference Committee, fulfill all the roles and responsibilities as a House Officer, and perform such other duties as are stipulated in these bylaws or the standing rules or are customarily assumed by the speaker of a house of delegates. While these roles are specific and outlined, they do not tell the full picture of the Speaker's responsibilities.

The Speaker assumes and fulfills all the roles of any other member of the Board of Directors. As the fiduciary for the association, the Board is responsible for oversight of the association operations including setting the strategic direction for the association, providing thoughtful and prudent financial oversight, and hiring and evaluating the CEO. Additionally, Board members serve on other committees, task forces, and work groups as assigned by the President. All of these roles are essential to a high functioning Board, particularly that of setting the strategic direction for the Association. Getting this role right requires a look into the future and assuming a duty of foresight. While these foresight efforts are focused on the association and its activities, crafting a good strategic plan that is focused on the future is all about advancing the profession and our members.

The Board roles and the House roles of the Speaker overlap in terms of leadership and direction. As one of three House Officers and the presiding officer during the formal meetings, the Speaker's role is to help delegates make good decisions that are in the best interest of moving the profession forward. I have learned over my first term that the Speaker's role is to also help delegates avoid making bad decisions. Another lesson I have learned in my first term is that in some circumstances, the Speaker must step in as a leader, rather than just an impartial arbiter. By using insight gleaned from their dual roles of board member and Chair of the House, the Speaker is qualified and informed to guide and lead, resulting in effective and impactful service to the Association and profession.

The intersection of these two roles is unique in Association governance and can strengthen the link between two important groups in APTA. We are best served when the Board and the House function appropriately in their respective roles. The House needs to be the voice of the profession and as such, its collective members must think more strategically about the needs of our profession in the future. It is not working at its optimal capacity when it is trying to direct the activities of the association, as that is the work of the elected Board of Directors and our CEO. The Speaker has the pulse on both groups and can effectively lead the House to focus its efforts on advancing the profession. In turn, this will improve the delegate experience by keeping them engaged in meaningful, substantive work.

As we move through the next century, the profession faces challenges and opportunities on multiple fronts, both internal and external. A high-functioning and future-focused House and Board is essential to achieving our vision. I look forward to the opportunity to help lead both groups in this work.

**Last Updated:** 04/10/2023

**Contact:** [governancehouse@apta.org](mailto:governancehouse@apta.org)