

Candidate Statement – Candidate for Director



LeeAnne Carrothers, PT, PhD

Question: What uniquely qualifies you for the role of Director, and how does that contribute to the association's vision, mission, and strategic plan?

Response:

I bring a breadth and depth of experience that includes clinical care, multidisciplinary research, education, administration, and participation in elected and appointed APTA positions. My work has grown in responsibility over time, and my roles have evolved from being the “boots on the ground” team member who operationalizes institutional mission and values to a leader who is actively involved in shaping the vision and mission for the future. My APTA leadership roles have provided exposure to the opportunities and challenges experienced by the largest component (California), one of the smallest (Alaska), and by both physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. These diverse roles and responsibilities have prepared me to work effectively in support of APTA's vision, mission, and strategic plan.

Over the course of my career, I have acquired and honed valuable skills necessary for the role of director. My communication skills enable me to build community; I consider broad and often opposing viewpoints and bring diverse stakeholders together toward a common goal. I welcome opportunities to learn from others' experience. I look at issues from both micro and macro perspectives, see gaps in current practice and opportunities to improve. I am comfortable and confident enough to share my observations, even when they may be controversial.

My professional and personal experiences with physical therapy position me to be an effective advocate for our profession and for the association. Though our profession has made considerable progress, who we are and what we do for our patients and communities are still not widely known and valued. My advocacy experiences have provided opportunities to educate patients, family members, legislators, and policy makers about our progress: the educational and clinical preparation required to practice physical therapy, the autonomy with which we practice, the variety of conditions for which physical therapy can improve patient's health and function, and how physical therapy intervention is often less costly and more effective than other options. I welcome continued opportunities to improve stakeholder understanding of our value for individuals and society.

In our organization that represents approximately one third of practicing physical therapists and physical therapist assistants in the US, there are ample opportunities to improve how we communicate our value to prospective members. We need to continue to ensure that membership is both accessible and valuable. We need to solicit feedback and continue to learn about current barriers to membership, and to be open to strategies that will engage the next generation of physical therapist and assistants. We also have opportunities to engage therapists who are members but not actively engaged in the association. A better understanding of barriers to membership and engagement will provide us the opportunity to transform the association. I am committed to actions that will grow the organization and represent the diversity of the communities we serve.

I have held an extensive variety of roles as a physical therapist that have broadened my exposure well beyond the “PT world.” I have educated myriad future and practicing clinicians, including physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, physicians, physician assistants, pharmacists, nurses, and health care educators. My

research on the unique challenges accessing and adapting primary health care for people with disabilities required collaboration with providers from many health disciplines. My current role as Director for the School of Allied Health in the largest and most rural state (AK) and in one of the most diverse urban communities in the nation (Anchorage) has honed my abilities to negotiate opportunities and challenges throughout health care education.

The knowledge and skills I have position me well to make a unique and valuable contribution to our association. I am extremely grateful for the opportunities my involvement has provided so far. I am well aware that today's PT practice and the current association were built on the "shoulders of giants." I am ready and able to take this next step in my career to help ensure the future of physical therapy. My passion for the profession, recognition of the value of physical therapy, prior experience, willingness to listen and learn, and determination to "leave the campsite [association] better than I found it" position me well to step into the role of director. I humbly ask for your vote.

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