

2023 Candidate Statement – Candidate for Nominating Committee



LaDarius (L.D.) Woods, PT, DPT, PhD

Question: What is your role as a member of the Nominating Committee to cultivate a pool of qualified potential candidates that inspires inclusive representation of a diverse membership?

Response:

As a member of the Nominating Committee, I will focus on fulfilling three key roles:

1. **Building** a diverse pool of candidates
2. **Advocating** for increased transparency
3. **Approaching** the nomination process from a social justice lens

APTA is a member driven, non-profit 501(c). Members serve the mission of APTA, *building a community that advances the profession of physical therapy to improve the health of society*. My diverse volunteer, non-profit experience allows me to serve in a multitude of roles from leading, challenging, doing, thinking, and supporting. Making assumptions prior to learning how a current team is functioning displays a cloak of naivete and can breed team animosity. I lean into Tuckman's team development concept of forming, storming, norming, and performing.

1. **Building** a diverse pool of candidates

As of December 31, 2022, Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy reports >350,000 licensed physical therapists (PT) and physical therapist assistants (PTAs), while APTA membership is < 70,000 members (that is < 20%). The Nominating Committee has an innovation opportunity to recruit and leverage the skills and expertise of future members. We have leadership programs such as the Fellowship in Higher Education Leadership, APTA Association Scholars Program (originally, Centennial Scholars), and Leadership, Administration, Management, and Practice (LAMP) Institute for Leadership where Nominating Committee can demonstrate intentionality by connecting and fostering activities to promote engagement and interest in national office. Similarly, the Nominating Committee can increase their intentionality within our sister affinity organizations such as American Academy of Physical Therapy (AAPPT) and National Association of Black Physical Therapist (NABPT) to name a few.

2. **Advocating** for increased transparency

As someone who has been in the House of Delegates (HOD) and now running for the Nominating Committee, my perspective has changed. Prior to running, I did my due diligence by speaking with candidates who have run in the past, current board of directors and nominating committee members, and previous board and nominating committee members. Here are a few suggestions to improve the process:

- a) outline the projected time commitments
- b) reimagine membership communication
- c) leverage media (e.g., social media) to enhance understanding of the process.

To expand on reimagining membership communication, I believe the Nominating Committee has an opportunity to eliminate the perceived secrecy of the nomination process. What if the Nominating Committee shared their slating rubric with the HOD? What if the Nominating Committee shared a breakdown of NC numbers at each phase of the cycle within the Hub (e.g., *Nominating Committee – 8 NC 2 completed – updated as of 1/14/2023*)? As a committee of the HOD, I believe the Nominating Committee has an opportunity to ensure voting parties have access to as much information as possible without compromising the integrity of our process.

3. **Approaching** the nomination process from a social justice lens.

A social justice lens allows everyone to examine preconceived notions, biases. For example, what exactly does qualified mean? Is a fifteen-year service within Lions Club International valued? Is serving on your local school board valued? Is a twenty-year military history valued? Or are we primarily valuing services within the profession such as delegate participation, chapter and academy leadership, and APTA national committees and task forces? Similarly, do we have an equitable candidacy process? Do we have mechanisms where candidates can demonstrate all their talents? Or is our candidacy process skewed towards candidates who write or interview well? How does our candidacy process account for visual impairments and hearing impairments or mental health conditions? From a social justice lens, we can begin to put practices in place that focus on providing a more equitable ability to engage at a national level.

I believe leveraging a social justice lens and increasing the nomination process transparency will facilitate a more inclusive ability for all physical therapy professionals to engage at a national level. We have a vision of *transforming society by optimizing movement to improve the human experience* and to achieve this vision we need to provide the environment where **ALL** interested parties feel welcomed, valued, and encouraged to engage.

Thank you for taking the time to read my candidate statement.

I hope you will consider voting for me for the Nominating Committee.