

2022 Candidate Statement – Candidate for Director



Carmen Cooper-Oguz, PT, DPT, MBA

Question: What is your vision for the future of APTA, and what knowledge, skills, and abilities do you possess to help us achieve that vision?

Response:

Since being elected to the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Board of Directors (BoD) in June 2019, my abilities and desire to advance the profession by representing approximately 100,000 APTA members (and {indirectly} tens of thousands of potential APTA members) have strengthened exponentially. As an incumbent Director, my vision of how APTA can continue to transform society includes placing an emphasis on the words “you”, “we”, and “us” that are meant to be representative of a transparent and harmonious spirit of engagement and organizational belonging.

By providing BoD input from the lens of a rural clinician and general businessperson, I have proudly participated in initiatives that oversaw the following accomplishments- all made possible through the collective efforts of members:

- As your Centennial Properties LLC President of the Board of Trustees, I have watched us strategically open a national headquarters that was designed/built to be a key element of APTA’s real estate asset portfolio intended to enhance engagement with members and other stakeholders;
- We began to take even bigger steps to become an organization more focused on engagement, belonging, and membership value;
- We celebrated our centennial year stylishly, respectfully, and safely in accordance with CDC guidelines to enter into our second centennial era with a solid, strategic plan;
- And, as your 3-year board liaison to the PT-PAC and to PPAC, I watched you selflessly donate your time/money and watched as you supported legislative calls to action geared towards advancing public policy priorities and bills that promote and protect all of us.

Through Don Clifton’s *CliftonStrengths* self-assessment process, I learned that I am a “relator”. Relators take interest in and enjoy working towards tasks that make sense. Advancing APTA’s vision and mission through transparency, proactivity, and harmonious engagement is what interests me. Here’s why....

I believe in our profession and in those who want to advance it. Fundamentally speaking, therapists want to help people; they want to prevent and/or alleviate disabilities and suffering and to make people feel physically, mentally, and emotionally good about themselves. What more noble cause exists? As an added bonus, it’s been researched and proven that physical therapy services contribute greatly to addressing the Triple Aim of Healthcare by improving the experience of care, improving the health of populations, and reducing per capita costs of health care. Everything we do individually, and then collectively within the APTA, touches one (or each) of these aims.

Further, according to my *CliftonStrengths* “Strength Insight Guide”, my top five of 34 possible themes/character traits that emerged through the self-assessment process are (in order of dominance): (1) Achiever, (2) Strategic, (3) Significance, (4) Relator, and (5) Competition. Don Clifton, “Father of Strengths Psychology” and inventor of *CliftonStrengths* is in my head.

Mr. Clifton's renowned (and copyrighted) explanations of the traits I **use/will continue to use for board service** speak volumes. He indicates:

- (1) Achievers tend to be instinctive advisors who are "engaged, intense, and involved". My assessment revealed that I likely make efforts to be "friendly and talkative whenever the situation demands." My goal is to always come across as a thoughtful, friendly, approachable listener.
- (2) Strategists tend offer answers/solutions to issues before others understand the question. They think through multiple scenarios before settling on one that makes the most sense. Basically, you will continue to get well-reasoned responses and timely follow-up from me.
- (3) Significance is the trait with which I wrestle, because it may seem arrogant. Mr. Clifton suggests that I may have the desire to be an influencer in a position of authority. I guess this is okay, because I know that my motivations for clinical/organizational service are untainted and transparent.
- (4) Relators enjoy tasks that make sense. Working together with you to advance the mission and vision of APTA makes perfect sense to me. We are APTA.
- (5) Competitors have both publically and non-publically known opponents. My biggest opponent happens to be me, so I compete daily with yesterday's version of myself. **Therefore, I pledge to give you the best of me every day.**

Notwithstanding my traits, I am in awe of the you, we, and us in the APTA community. At times, we may feel like our community is carrying the weight of non-members who may question (or even disparage) our efforts. To these potential members I say, "The work of APTA impacts you positively whether or not you realize it. APTA benefits your patients, your business, your employer, and your family's livelihood. Let's sit down and talk about how you can help by working with us."

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