

2025 Candidate Statement – Candidate for Vice Speaker



Robin L. Dole, PT, DPT, EdD
Board-Certified Clinical Specialist in Pediatric Physical Therapy

Question: How will the core attributes for elected leadership you possess impact your effectiveness in the role of the Vice Speaker?

Response:

Serving a one-year term as Vice Speaker has provided an invaluable opportunity to immediately put my core leadership attributes into practice. The attributes of adaptability, courage, foresight, inclusivity, integrity, and strategic thinking are not merely concepts, but essential tools for effective leadership that will continue to guide me in a full term.

Effective leadership is adaptive and new board members must rapidly assimilate into the board's collaborative culture and the nuances of national-level governance. This attribute was uniquely tested this past year as I hit the ground running as a House Officer, actively taking on initiatives to support new delegates and the new Chief Delegate Council and in preparation for the 2025 House. The transition from component-level to national service requires understanding the different foci of responsibilities between volunteer leadership and staff. Through a constant reassessment of my own role and a willingness to adjust my approach, I believe I have navigated this dynamic effectively. Adaptability is inextricably linked to courage and my professional experience as a dean prepared me for delivering on outcomes in the face of adversity. This includes making unpopular but necessary decisions to remain fiscally responsible during times of challenge. I believe a courageous leader acknowledges their limitations and embraces collaboration to lead a team to effective outcomes. As we reviewed survey data and discussed possible priorities for the new APTA strategic plan, my focus was to ensure that any plan that emerged also remained responsive and adaptive to the complicated landscape in which we find ourselves. "Planning without action is futile, action without planning is fatal" (Cornelius Fichtner). I have brought a different perspective, and I am comfortable with directly laying the challenge on the table.

That includes, at times, disagreeing with what might be popular. I do this knowing that a safe environment for constructive disagreement leads to a stronger, more unified body.

Effective leadership respects the present while looking to our envisioned future and employing foresight to anticipate emerging trends and technologies. For APTA this means understanding the existential threats to our profession, including evolving payment models, rising student debt, and responding to unexpected external pressures. As a Board member, a House Officer, and Trustee for the PT Fund, I have engaged with these challenges and worked collaboratively to champion innovative strategies in response. This futuristic outlook is complemented by my strength as a strategic thinker. As Adam Grant discusses in *Hidden Potential*, mistakes are not failures, but opportunities to learn and grow. I believe it is unwise to make decisions out of fear, knowing there is always the potential for risk or loss.

Balancing fear with knowledge and courage is essential. One way to foster such an environment within APTA is to try new approaches and be willing to "fail forward" together. I believe the House can move from a body that reacts to individual motions to become a collective that proactively works for the profession's future. Revisiting the motion concept and motion development phase and improving on the collaboration efforts from this past year will be a focus of my work as a House Officer. Listening to the generative discussion, I am

convinced that we are ready for change and new ways of accomplishing our work. I am excited to empower our Chief Delegate Council to approach our governance work with an eye to strategically setting priorities for the profession.

Fostering a sense of belonging and building trust is an essential role of the Vice Speaker. An inclusive leader values unique perspectives, encourages diverse contributions, and prioritizes shared decision-making. An educator at heart, I relish the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues toward a bolder vision for the House that generates progress in our next-level governance efforts. I am committed to ensuring that delegates have the resources needed to be prepared and empowered to make thoughtful and informed decisions. Most importantly, a leader with integrity is guided by a strong moral compass and ethical principles. My professional experience has reinforced this. I recognize that board decisions have a lasting impact across the profession and association. I fully respect our group's final decisions, knowing that we all have participated in the deep discussions that informed those decisions.

My professional work and long career of service have consistently demonstrated APTA's core attributes for elected leadership. I am well prepared for a full term as vice speaker and ask for your support as we work together towards APTA's future.