QUESTION 1:
Considering the position for which you are slated, share your opinion on an issue pertinent to the growth and development of the profession.

RESPONSE:
Physical therapist education (PTE) has been a subject of perpetual discussion in our association. I am not typically a 'change agent', however, I believe the time has come to radically change physical therapist education to prepare students to function in a rapidly shifting healthcare environment, and ready them to meet our vision of transforming society.

The APTA House of Delegates (House) recognized this need as well, and in 2014, passed two motions related to PTE. The first was RC 12-14, Promoting Excellence in Physical Therapist Professional Education. The APTA Board of Directors (Board) created a task force to address this motion, with the charge to provide strategic advice, counsel, and options regarding current and emerging issues impacting the ability of physical therapist education to produce practitioners to meet the needs of the evolving health care system. The task force reported to the Board in November of 2015 with several recommendations related to identification of graduate competencies, determination of essential PTE program resources, establishment of a comprehensive data management system, assessments that benchmark and assess student performance, development of an education research agenda, and enhancement of faculty development and retention.

The second motion was RC 13-14, Best Practice for Physical Therapist Clinical Education, which charged APTA to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to identify best practice for physical therapist clinical education, from professional level through postgraduate clinical training. The Board created a task force to meet this charge, and its report is coming to the 2017 House.

Other educational initiatives have transpired over the past few years. In 2011, APTA awarded a grant to a group of investigators whose purpose was to uncover and examine the crucial dimensions of excellence in physical therapist education across academic and clinical settings. Physical Therapist Education in the 21st Century (PTE-21) spent two years gathering data, and is in the process of presenting their findings at professional conferences, with two publications in the pipeline for Physical Therapy.

The American Council of Academic Physical Therapy (ACAPT) formed as a component of APTA in 2013. Their purpose is to take a leadership role in setting direction for physical therapist academic and clinical
education. In 2014, ACAPT held a clinical education summit resulting in production of eleven recommendations including development of close partnerships between academic and clinical entities, recognition of centers of excellence in clinical education, development and assessment of a core set of competencies students must meet prior to entering clinical experiences, and articulation of a profession-wide definition of entry-level competence.

As an additional example of this flurry of education-related activities, James Gordon presented the 2014 Mary McMillan lecture on the goal of greatness in physical therapist education. He asserted that academic physical therapy is the profession’s infrastructure for knowledge creation. As such, he stated all physical therapist education programs must be committed to research and scholarship, and every program must have faculty with expertise across the spectrum of physical therapy. Dr. Gordon emphasized that there is no ‘us’ and ‘them’ when addressing physical therapist education issues, just ‘we’. As he stated, ‘We are ACAPT.’ ‘We are CAPTE.’ ‘We are APTA.’

This brings us full-circle to a key recommendation of the Excellence in Physical Therapist Education Task Force. It created the Education Leadership Partnership (ELP): a global, decision-making group that brings all stakeholders together to promote excellence in physical therapist education. The core members are APTA Board, ACAPT, and the Section on Education. Depending on the issue at hand, feedback and input is sought from a variety of other stakeholders, including clinical educators, employers, students, FSBPT, ABPTRFE, CAPTE, and PTA Educators. The Education Leadership Partnership currently has eight subgroups working on an education data management system, prioritization of an education research agenda, description of essential resources needed to initiate and sustain PTE programs, faculty development needs, performance-based student outcome assessments, outcome competencies, student debt, and the feasibility of addressing PTA education issues.

Development of the ELP addresses the House directive for collaborative endeavors in the area of PTE, and draws together the independent and wide-ranging efforts of several entities into a cohesive and structured unit. This will allow prioritization of activities, staging of work, and shifting from pockets of experts to a coherent force for change in PTE. Better together, indeed.
QUESTION 2:
Please write a position statement on an issue about which you feel passionate.

RESPONSE:
It is no great revelation that I am quite passionate about governance. I find it fascinating and invigorating to continually explore how to improve delegate engagement and decision-making at the APTA House of Delegates (House).

Recent efforts to enhance governance date back to the 2005 Task Force on House of Delegates Governance, whose charge it was ‘to identify mechanisms that will enhance the outcome and effectiveness of House of Delegates’. They struggled with some of the same issues we continue to face today, such as whether debate should be allowed during the Motion Discussion Groups, and if candidate interviews are the best way to illuminate requisite skills for national office. On the other hand, through use of technology such as the House HUB, we have made great strides in capitalizing on an opportunity they identified to design systems that ‘allow for wording edits prior to the House, permitting more substantive debate on issues rather than language’. At the end of 2005, APTA Board of Directors (Board) adopted a policy that stated ‘The goal of APTA governance is to engage members in an accessible and inclusive process that instills pride, trust, and value in the Association and the profession. The governance process shall utilize the most efficient and effective human and financial resources to enhance communication, delegate preparedness, and leadership development to achieve timely and meaningful changes in practice, education, and research that will advance the profession and association toward Vision 2020 and beyond.’ These words continue to guide our efforts today.

From 2011-2013, the Association undertook an extensive review of the governance process, with four subcommittees addressing chapters, sections, APTA Board of Directors, and the House of Delegates. Many dramatic changes were proposed, and in truth, few were adopted. However, the work led to critical bylaw amendments in 2013 that clarified roles of the Board and House. That year also saw creation of standing rules delineating main motion criteria and their use by the Reference Committee, to ensure, among other things, that motions are national in scope and sufficient background information has been gathered and disseminated. One proposal from the governance review process not adopted was the concept of a Resolutions Committee. This was to be a 14-member committee composed of delegates, Board members, and House Officers, whose functions were to determine whether a motion concept was best handled by the Board or the House, and to ensure House motions were fully researched and developed. The current process of assigning a Reference Committee liaison and a Board contact to each motion maker has accomplished the spirit of this proposal by engendering collaboration among the motion maker, Board, and APTA staff. By guiding the motion maker through completion of the Motion
Development Form, motion concepts are thoroughly researched and vetted, resulting in either well-crafted, substantive motions, or the realization that the intent can be accomplished via another avenue.

Our ongoing challenge is to continue to refine these past efforts, by identifying mechanisms and processes that engage delegates in ways that are meaningful to them, and foster deliberation and reflection. We are embarking on two large projects that present opportunities for structural change through review of APTA policies and bylaws, and review of nominations, candidacy, and elections processes. Areas of possible change may include the composition of the House, frequency of House sessions, and the manner in which we elect people to serve in national positions. Regardless of structural changes, I plan to pursue ways to facilitate delegate preparedness by completing delegate education modules, creating opportunities at the House and throughout the year for in-depth discussions on timely professional issues, and fostering streamlined collaboration among all entities that comprise the House: voting delegates, non-voting delegates, and consultants.

It has been an honor to serve as Speaker of the APTA House of Delegates for three years, and I thank the delegates for the opportunity to do so for another term. Together, we will continue to strive toward the goal of accessible, inclusive, timely, and meaningful APTA governance.