

Brandon K. Smith, PT, DPT works as a PT Clinical Leader at Sheltering Arms Institute in Richmond. Brandon is a board-certified specialist in geriatric physical therapy, and certified exercise expert for aging adults. Eager to make his mark as a PT student, Brandon held multiple leadership positions while pursuing his DPT at VCU, culminating with his election to chair the VPTA Student SIG. He also served as the PT-PAC Project Committee chair within the APTA Student Assembly. As a clinician, Brandon has continued in his efforts to advocate for the profession, currently serving in the role of Chapter Vice President. He has been fortunate to serve as a delegate to the APTA House of Delegates for the past few years and most recently acted as an alternate delegate. Brandon is a past recipient of the VPTA Emerging Leader award as well as the APTA Emerging Leaders award. While in the clinic, Brandon thoroughly enjoys his time as clinical instructor to a multitude of PT and PTA students, teaching in various transdisciplinary capacities, and focusing on geriatrics and the rehabilitation of individuals with limb loss.

Our profession, and healthcare as whole, continues to face ever changing and novel challenges. In my opinion, the biggest challenge we face is the ever growing population of older adults. Most notably, the population of older adults that will or have become elder orphans. These individuals, who lack the family support or resources to remain independent and age successfully in place, are facing an uphill battle especially given age-related changes and the general lack of routine exercise to combat against it. Despite evidence that we are able to alleviate this dilemma with skilled PT intervention, we continually deal with a clash against payors and lack of infrastructure to support the needs of older adults. This shortfall, combined with social and public policies endorsing ageism, will have significant implications for the aging population for years to come. Our profession is well placed to ameliorate these concerns and should devote greater time and effort to this issue.

I have aspired to serve as a delegate since my time as a PT student. In the summer of 2012 I was fortunate to be chosen as a student usher to the APTA House of Delegates. I applied for this position on a whim, having heard of the opportunity at the last minute from a professor. While in Tampa, I was fascinated by the House and it's singular focus of advancing our vocation with the task held by appointed delegates. Luck was on my side, as I happened to be assigned to usher for the Speaker of the House. Little did I know that it would be Shawne Soper, whom to this day serves as a mentor and role model. This opportunity to interact with the Virginia delegation sparked my desire to serve. Since that time, I have twice served as a Delegate to the House, and once as an alternate delegate, each time fulfilling my aspirations and only continuing to fuel my passion for association advocacy. Despite this past year's House occurring via Zoom, and the strong possibility of this in the future, I remain steadfast in my desire to remain at the forefront of our policy making body and be the voice for my colleagues within the Commonwealth.

I enter this election with a variety of experiences that have prepared me for the Delegate role. Starting with my time as a student usher at the House and culminating in the past three years as a part of the Virginia delegation, I remain dedicated to monitoring the issues that have far-reaching implications for our field. I am well acquainted with the requirements for year-round governance and its parliamentary nuances. Whether championing the importance of rehabilitation in service as a key contact to local elected officials, attending the annual APTA VA Lobby Day, or engaging with members of Congress at the APTA Federal Advocacy Forum, I have acquired a diverse skill set that will allow me to advocate for the profession across the region, state, and nation. Furthermore, my current role as Chapter Vice President and work on the VPTA Board of Directors and Executive Committee has provided the opportunity to refine the collaborative skills that are essential to serve as a Delegate. As such, I am well-prepared to espouse the values of our profession, and ask for your vote in support of election to the Delegate position.