

Questions for Candidates for APHA Speaker of the Governing Council

**1) What are your goals for the Governing Council over the next three years?**

When I ran for Speaker in 2020, I stated that I had three goals for my Speakership: First, we needed to modernize the processes of the Governing Council. Second, we needed to increase engagement. Third, we had to increase transparency in all we do so that people do not feel disenfranchised. We have made strides in all these areas through the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Governing Council Engagement, the results of APHA Your Way, and the Strategic Planning Process. As Speaker, I have worked diligently over the past three years to ensure that we have worked to increase engagement through activities such as the Speaking with the Speaker Series. We have worked to increase transparency through increased opportunities for questioning of APHA Leaders, sharing of survey results, and the opportunity to engage in the APHA LEAD Governing Council Community. At the same time, I have worked with all of you to identify ways we can improve and modernize the governing council experience – resulting in new methods of voting at the Annual Meeting, more explicit instructions relating to the role and function of the Governing Council, and the development of feedback processes for Councilors to engage the Speaker throughout the year. We have done a lot. However, there is more to do. I am running again to see those things we have laid the groundwork for to fruition. This includes ongoing efforts to increase engagement by implementing the APHA Your Way Recommendations and your feedback. I aim to continue our work to modernize the Governing Council through continued alignment with our purpose as stated in the Bylaws and how we operate and to increase the transparency of our actions through novel means of information dissemination – such as brief reports and implementing a more robust liaison system. In short, my goal for the next three years of the Speakership is to advance what we have done. We are moving from a ‘learning phase’ to an ‘implementation phase.’ My aim is that when my three-year term is up, we will have a more engaged Governing Council and that any member - whether in leadership or not – can understand its purpose.

**2) Describe your experience and skills in managing debate and a diversity of opinions and priority in a large forum and how you’ve utilized this experience as Speaker.**

The diversity of opinions and experiences makes us strong as a Governing Council and an Association. Too often, we find ourselves in our echo chamber – unable to see other perspectives or solutions. As Speaker, I have always endeavored to ensure that everyone who wants their voice heard can have their voice heard. I recognize not all members will want to stand and speak – so we have created alternative means to ask questions, such as during the post-meeting surveys. Furthermore, I have made myself available to members to discuss how they might bring their views and ideas to the Council. The ability to manage significant debate with a diversity of opinions is not something that is easily taught. It is a skill set I have developed throughout my professional career and service to APHA. As Chair of the LGBTQ Health Caucus, for example, we regularly faced competing interests in our advocacy priorities. As Parliamentarian of my College, I often have found myself in the middle of discussions related to shared governance. For me, the ability to manage these – and many other – debates goes back to a few key

points. First, you must know what the ground rules are. In the Governing Council, we have established these ground rules by addressing the Speaker – rather than individual Councilors – and our self-imposed time limit on debate. Knowing the ground rules of the discussion process, you can develop a strategy to ensure that individuals are engaged and represented. In the Council, this may include limiting speakers to 1-2 minutes for statements if many are in line. It may mean alternating between positions if multiple individuals seek to speak. Knowing – and understanding – the ground rules of the debate is critical to ensuring that a discussion is successfully managed and that we can accomplish the agenda of the Council.

As Speaker, I see myself as a neutral arbitrator of discussion. I focus on ensuring that all positions can be represented so that the Councilors can make the most informed decision possible when voting. Embedded in this approach, for me, is the recognition that we all share a common appreciation of public health and social justice. It is often only how we wish to achieve optimal public health that varies. To this end, I always aim to ensure we can have a vigorous, respectful debate that allows diverse perspectives to be heard. This does not mean we will all leave the debate in complete agreement, but through conversation, the Council can make the most informed decision possible.