

Jessica Carter

I am honored to be nominated to serve the Texas Speech-Language Hearing Association as President. I recognize the magnitude and responsibility inherent in this role and believe my experience as a clinician, educator, and leader has prepared me for the dedication and commitment required.

My path as a speech-language pathologist is perhaps different from that of many. My undergraduate degree is in music, and I found speech-language pathology mostly by chance. While I never saw myself working in public schools, that is exactly where I found myself after graduation. The decade I spent in the public schools was formative and provided me the opportunity to learn Spanish and become a bilingual SLP. I celebrated successes with my colleagues, and we supported each other through the inevitable challenges of school-based services. I saw first-hand the needs of students who lived in poverty or came from culturally diverse backgrounds. These experiences profoundly shaped my outlook as an SLP, and I found myself wanting to be a difference-maker.

In my current role as the Director of Clinical Education at UT Dallas, I am fortunate to play a key role in the lives of many graduate students. I strive to forge connections and foster a sense of belonging that encourages individuals to develop their unique strengths and reach their fullest potential. This love of mentorship and a desire for excellence has extended into volunteer leadership through TSHA. During my tenure as a committee co-chair and the TSHA Vice President for Research and Development, we have made significant contributions to our organization and its membership. The newly developed Webinar Wednesdays series provides high-quality CE opportunities and is available for membership to access the first Wednesday of each month. We published Disability Determination guidelines for public school SLPs in the areas of Fluency, Voice, and Articulation Disorders, as well as Language Disorders and its two language companion manuals: for students from Culturally or Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds, which I co-authored, and Autism. In addition, more Guidelines are due out in the upcoming year, including the Specific Learning Disability companion manual and a manual for Pediatric Feeding and Swallowing Disorders in the public schools. My hope is that these educational resources allow our members to not only hone their skills but foster the much-needed professional recognition that comes through practicing with excellence.

Over the last several years, TSHA has striven to meet the evolving needs of our membership following the pandemic, and I have been fortunate to be deeply involved in the workings of our organization. As I roll off TSHA's Executive Board, I am reminded of my calling to mentorship and its alignment with the mission of our organization: to empower members to provide the highest quality, life-changing care for individuals with communication and related disorders. I am humbled to accept this nomination for President and ready to foster connection and belonging, promote educational excellence, and equip our membership for self-advocacy should I be elected.

Synopsis:

I am ready for the work of serving our membership by fostering connection and belonging, promoting educational excellence, and equipping our membership for self-advocacy.