

My Leadership Pathway

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Service as president of the Illinois State University chapter of the National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association began a leadership pathway informed by faculty and administration who broadened my career interests. NSSLHA support opened the door to the Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ISHA) and ASHA conventions and helped me secure my first position as a staff SLP at a rehabilitation center that offered specialization in birth through three cases and experience supervising student interns. Through an ISHA presentation, a member of the ISHA Board appointed me to the ISHA Licensure Committee. Learning how to work with policy makers taught me how to advocate for key initiatives and build a team of advocates; skills critically needed throughout a career. Next, I accepted a supervisory position at Eastern Illinois University (EIU) followed by a Ph.D. and my career transitioned to a university setting.

I was elected ISHA's Vice President for Convention Services followed by service as ISHA President. During my presidency, I learned from other state association presidents how to achieve state-wide change through the network of the Council of State Association Presidents and we finally passed the Illinois Licensure Act! Achieving this goal led to an appointment to the Illinois Birth Through Three Credentialing Board, a visiting professorship at Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia and an appointment to the ASHA Task Force on Treatment Outcomes followed by election to ASHA's Legislative Council. These roles proved important to my appointment as Department Chair where I was able to make contributions to the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders. I was then appointed to lead a Task Force on Graduate Education at the university and this led to an offer to serve as Dean of the Graduate School, Research, and International Programs.

Service on the ASHA Legislative Council and related committees led to election as ASHA's Vice President for Finance on the Board of Directors. Work to address key issues in graduate education led to an appointment to the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) Master's Committee. This was a pathway to election to the CGS Board of Directors and to President of the Board and to the Research Committee of the Graduate Record Examination Board. These experiences led to my appointment as Senior Vice President at the Council of Graduate Schools and very exciting opportunities to work nationally with universities and colleges along with continued opportunities to serve ASHA as Chair of ASHA's Committee on Leadership Cultivation and liaison to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Next Generation.

Through volunteering I discovered what I really cared about, how to advocate for the change I believed in and how to build a team of colleagues to achieve that change. In the process, an incredible group of talented, passionate, and caring professionals changed me.