

Dear Members of the Executive Board and ILOTA Nominations Committee,

I am honored to formally nominate myself, Samantha Smith, MS, OTR/L, for the position of Secretary of the Illinois Occupational Therapy Association Executive Board. With 10 years of dedicated service in the field of occupational therapy, I am passionate about advancing our profession and contributing to the growth and success of our state association. I am eager to advance professionally at the state level of participation and share my skills and knowledge with other occupational therapist leaders.

Throughout my career, I have actively engaged with various facets of advancing occupational therapy at the organizational and community level, gaining valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by our team members. Through the experiences provided below I believe that I uphold the skills necessary to be a valuable Secretary on the ILOTA Executive Board.

I will elaborate on a few previous positions held that share similar responsibilities to the ILOTA Secretary.

- In 2018-2021, I was nominated as a Representative, Vice Chair, Chair, and Leadership Liaison of Occupational Therapy Practice Council at Shirley Ryan AbilityLab. In this role, I developed and disseminated meeting minutes, oversaw discipline-specific goals and committees, and facilitated communication with people of interest across various care sites.
- I have also upheld the role of Occupational Therapy Month Committee Chair organizing and coordinating Continuing Education courses, group activities, collaborating with our hospital's social media/marketing team to promote awareness and advocacy for our profession including "A Day in the Life" videos and an "Occupational Therapy Month Quiz" as a social media presence.
- Since 2022, I have been the Allied Health Orientation and Training Manager for the organization in our Internal Staff Development Department. This role requires a great deal of correspondence with other managers and hospital leaders, overseeing the onboarding and professional development of new hire therapists across all care settings. I collaborate with our team to standardize practices and tailor 90 Day New Hire Curriculum and mentoring plans.
- I have been selected as a REFLECT Mentor "Reflective Experience For Learning, Education, Collaboration, and Training." and now act as manager of the REFLECT Mentor Program.
- I have also served for 2 years on Shirley Ryan AbilityLab's Safety Event Team collaborating the Director of Allied Health, Chief Nursing Officer, Director of Patient Safety and Accreditation, and Chief Medical Officer to address patient safety reports and drive practice change. We were able to identify gaps in practice/knowledge and make changes to Allied Health practice to prevent further incidents and patient safety events such as reconnecting oxygen to the wall instead of leaving oxygen on portable oxygen tanks at the end of sessions and streamlining communication between managers and the scheduling team to ensure therapists who do not have Advanced Competencies (i.e. vents, LVADs) do not get scheduled with those patient populations.
- Additionally, I have assisted with driving practice change as a participant on an Oncology Practice Committee working to develop a screening tool for admission, provide mentorship, and lead educational trainings to other occupational therapists to improve therapist confidence and team communication with patients being admitted on specific "tracks" including a Palliative or Restorative track to develop the most appropriate plan of care and address client-centered goals.
- Outside of work, I am dedicated to community service as an Adult Small Group Leader/Volunteer for Operation Snowball, a national program focused on you drug and alcohol prevention. Over 19 years of participation, I have developed leadership skills in facilitating group sessions, promoting healthy lifestyles, and fostering a supportive environment for adolescents of various backgrounds.
- At Western Michigan University, I was nominated on the Executive Board as Director of Administration and Director of Scholarship of Alpha Phi Fraternity upholding secretary roles, taking meeting minutes,

coordinating philanthropic events with the Alumni Board of Directors, taking attendance, and ensuring members took advantage of library study hours with groups.

Throughout the aforementioned experience in my professional and personal life, I have demonstrated my commitment to fostering collaboration and driving initiatives to advance our profession. If elected as Secretary, I am eager to bring my organizational skills and attention to detail to streamline communication and enhance operational efficiency within the board. My proficiency in facilitating meetings with leaders, record-keeping, creative problem-solving, and innovation in various committees and task forces will enable me to fulfill the responsibilities of this position effectively. My vision for the role of Secretary includes promoting collaboration, accountability, and inclusivity within our association. I am dedicated to ensuring that all members have access to timely and accurate information, fostering an environment where everyone's voice is heard and valued.

I am eager to leverage my skills and experiences to support Illinois Occupational Therapy Association's mission and advance our profession. Thank you for considering my nomination. I look forward to the opportunity to serve as Secretary and collaborate with each of you to achieve our shared goals.

Sincerely,

Samantha R. Smith, MS, OTR/L

**Role/Title:** Allied Health Orientation and Training Manager; Senior I Occupational Therapist Nerve, Muscle, Bone Innovation Center

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\*References available upon request