

2018 Slate of Board Nominations – At-Large:

Two At-Large Positions - Requirement: Current TAASA Individual Membership, Authorized Delegate of an Organizational Membership or Supporter Membership

NOMINEE

Gary Boshears, Chief of Police
Granite Shoals Police Department
Individual Member of Region B

1. List your current and/or past service in the movement against sexual assault or the experience you bring that is relevant to TAASA board membership.

I have over 17 years of experience as a law enforcement officer including experience in corrections, patrol, investigations, and administration. While working in investigations and now in administration, I have worked to make our investigations into sexual assaults more focused on the needs of the survivor and have worked to implement trauma informed principals into our investigations. Our agency is currently implementing new approaches to these investigations designed to reduce the number of times a survivor must tell the story of their assault while also enhancing our ability to investigate and prosecute these crimes. Additionally, since 2013 I have served as a trainer for the statewide Sexual Assault Family Violence Investigator Course and have trained several hundred law enforcement officers across the state in this program.

2. List the strengths/special skills/background you bring to TAASA board service and/or to this particular board position.

As a law enforcement officer, I have been an advocate for sexual assault victims and for implementing law enforcement programs to aid survivors in recovery. I have extensive experience in training law enforcement officers in sexual assault investigative techniques and focus on training these officers on trauma informed approaches to investigations. Additionally, I have a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Criminal Justice and a Master of Public Administration Degree.

3. List what goals, expertise and skill set you would bring to the TAASA board if elected.

I have extensive expertise and skills in law enforcement investigations into sexual assaults and trauma informed approaches to those investigations. I have implemented new programs within my department to enhance our responses to these crimes. I have extensive experience as a law enforcement trainer on this topic as well. A goal of mine would be to have TAASA working closely with law enforcement trainers and programs to ensure that officers who investigate these crimes have received the latest in training trends and techniques so they are in a better position to provide the highest quality of service to sexual assault survivors. I would also like to see TAASA advocate in the legislature for more required training for law enforcement in the area of sexual assault investigations. Many law enforcement officers only receive basic training on this topic and little continuing training. I believe more training and continuing training for law enforcement on this topic is a necessity.

NOMINEE

Shannon Lowry, Program Service Specialist
Leadership Academy: Texas (TMPA)
Individual Member of Region B

1. List your current and/or past service in the movement against sexual assault or the experience you bring that is relevant to TAASA board membership.

I am currently working on a school based prevention-like-program which seeks to build community with local law enforcement officers, school counselors, and students using relationship practices. I previously worked for a number of years in direct service as a Legal Advocate, and for the past 7 years I have been deeply involved in the anti-sexual assault movement. What started as volunteering in an area I was very passionate about, has since turned into a career of advocacy. During my undergraduate career I had the opportunity to start the first survivor's support group on campus, as well as help organize awareness campaigns among the student body. I have also been involved in several local SARTs, working to facilitate community collaboration, education, and advocacy. I have been involved in the TAASA Diversity Task Force over the past few years, and on the TAASA Board of Directors for the past term. I want to continue to be involved in the movement across the state.

2. List the strengths/special skills/background you bring to TAASA board service and/or to this particular board position.

I have a Master's Degree in Victim Services Management, and previously worked in direct service, as well as had the opportunity to intern at the state capital. Having worked in these various areas in addition to working directly with law enforcement, has given me a unique perspective into the challenges faced by sexual assault survivors. Working directly with clients has allowed me to see how our systems impede the survivor's access to resources, and also their ability to heal. One of the duties of my previous position was being an on-call advocate who accompanied sexual assault survivors to the hospital for a SANE exam. I have seen firsthand the devastating impact it has on survivors when the hospital and other community partners are not trauma informed.

3. List what goals, expertise and skill set you would bring to the TAASA board if elected.

I want to help grow the vision of TASSA, by effecting change from the legislative level, down to the best practices and procedures of first responders. One of the most frustrating situations I have come across are cases where sexual abuse of a child is reported, and the agencies involved take weeks to respond. I want to help advocates across the state that are in similar situations by providing resources and assistance. I want to help give a voice to local direct service staff because they are the ones on the front lines, it is imperative that their voice be heard in this movement. Through my experience working with sexual assault survivors in the legal system, I believe I can help identify additional barriers faced by survivors every day. I want to make networking and fostering relationships between agencies across the state a priority, in order to help remove barriers to justice for survivors.

NOMINEE

Jason Lundquist, Sergeant/Unit Supervisor
Waco Police Department-Crimes Against Children Unit
Individual Member of Region C

1. List your current and/or past service in the movement against sexual assault or the experience you bring that is relevant to TAASA board membership.

I have been a police officer for approximately 18 years. For the past 3 1/2 I have supervised the Waco Police Department Crimes Against Children Unit. I would estimate that more than half of the cases worked by my Unit (approx. 1200/yr) are of sexual assault. I also am a member of the Heart of Texas Human Trafficking Coalition and serve on it's Steering and Prosecution & Protection sub-committees.

2. List the strengths/special skills/background you bring to TAASA board service and/or to this particular board position.

I have a TCOLE Master Peace Officer License. I am a TCOLE certified instructor. I am currently working on my masters degree in criminal justice. I present classes on the role of law enforcement of child abuse investigations, digital and social media evidence for investigators, and the recognition of domestic minor sex trafficking as child abuse.

3. List what goals, expertise and skill set you would bring to the TAASA board if elected.

Law enforcement can be it's own worst enemy when it comes to serving survivors of sexual assault. Through my work with the HOTHTC I have seen how collaboration and a holistic, victim centered response can bring successful outcomes and positive perceptions.

NOMINEE

Michael Nixon, Detective
City of Beaumont Police Department
Individual Member of Region D

1. List your current and/or past service in the movement against sexual assault or the experience you bring that is relevant to TAASA board membership.

As a seasoned sexual assault investigator, I would bring an opened minded criminal investigation based perspective to the board. This could provide a real-world basis that could prove to be valuable in the decision making process, because I have experience interviewing survivors and actors. The firsthand knowledge obtained through those interviews could be presented, modified, and/or used to improve services.

2. List the strengths/special skills/background you bring to TAASA board service and/or to this particular board position.

I have been an instructor for law enforcement in state for several years, and worked to obtain the ability to convey information to others, in manner they would be able to understand, retain, and recall for later use. In read the description of the At Large Position, a major part of those duties is to report to the membership, the skill possess as an instructor would be very valuable.

3. List what goals, expertise and skill set you would bring to the TAASA board if elected.

If elected to the TAASA board, I work to continue the growth in education of the public to the act of sexual assault, and the long term traumatic effects it has on the survivors. I would work to try and find ways to implement common sense, trauma informed techniques, when interacting with sexual assault survivors.

NOMINEE

Elizabeth Newsom, Owner/Lead Therapist
Realistic Expectations, PLLC
Individual Member of Region C

1. List your current and/or past service in the movement against sexual assault or the experience you bring that is relevant to TAASA board membership.

As a sex therapist/educator, I work to advocate for sexual minorities, specifically educating professionals about working with kinky and poly clients. Research indicates that a fairly large portion of those with alternative sexualities either fear they will be or are being discriminated against (or worse) and I work to fight against that by educating professionals locally (hopefully nationally, if my presentation proposals are accepted by the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists and Loving More conferences).

2. List the strengths/special skills/background you bring to TAASA board service and/or to this particular board position.

I have a Master's degree in Social Work, am a board certified social work supervisor, have presented at several conferences (including TAASA), assist in the development of new platforms for educating about alternative sexualities (volunteer with the planning committee for PolyDallas Millennium), am excellent at researching/planning, have been able to start my own therapy practice (since 2012) and grown it to now have a total of 3 employees, have volunteered with the Plano Crisis Response Team, and I see trauma clients every day of every week. I know what sexual assault looks like to different people and try to advocate to the best of my ability.

3. List what goals, expertise and skill set you would bring to the TAASA board if elected.

I would like to continue to advocate for people with alternative lifestyles, especially clients who are gender non-conforming, trans or non-binary and kinky and consensually non-monogamous. I very much enjoy presenting on these topics and am doing what I can to provide education in my area about these topics by providing CEU opportunities and presenting where ever I can.

NOMINEE

Jeff Patterson, Lecturer
University of Texas - Austin
Individual Member of Region B

1. List your current and/or past service in the movement against sexual assault or the experience you bring that is relevant to TAASA board membership.

As a programs officer at the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, I was responsible for two funded projects in counseling victims of sexual assault; one dealing with counseling college students, and another in developing informational materials for compassionately supporting victims of sexual assault getting criminal and counseling assistance. As a graduate student, I was an active member of Students Against Sexual Assault chapters at the University of Houston and American University.

2. List the strengths/special skills/background you bring to TAASA board service and/or to this particular board position.

I have nearly two decade's experience in nonprofit management. I have served a Grants Officer and Director of Communications for the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, and currently serve, or have served, on the boards of the United Ways of Texas, the Catholic Hospital Association of Texas, the Burkett Foundation, Texas Impact, the National Association of Nonprofit Organizations & Executives, and committees of the Council on Foundations and the Conference of Southwest Foundations.

3. List what goals, expertise and skill set you would bring to the TAASA board if elected.

My hope is that in serving on the board would help to broaden public understanding of the needs of survivors of sexual assault and provided a more compassionate community support network to help victims to live healthy, happy lives in the future.

NOMINEE

Sayama Turner, Founder and CEO
Fight Against Sexual Assault
Individual Member of Region B

1. List your current and/or past service in the movement against sexual assault or the experience you bring that is relevant to TAASA board membership.

My current service as a Nationally Certificated Victim Advocate under the National Advocate Credentialing Program with the National Organization for Victim Assistance with a specialization in Sexual Assault and as a Community Engagement Specialist and Youth Drug Prevention Educator for a Drug Free Community Coalition will be very valuable as a TAASA board member in the movement against sexual assault. Also, my past service in the United States Air Force as a Human Resources Manager and Sexual Assault Rape Victim and Community Advocate for the Department of Defense will be significant to serve in the role as an At-Large Member.

2. List the strengths/special skills/background you bring to TAASA board service and/or to this particular board position.

My background and special skills as a Sexual Assault and Rape Victim Advocate with over 20 years of Human Resources experience in the United States Air Force and a Youth Drug Prevention Educator, I know my diverse skills and qualifications will make me an asset to the TAASA board. The strengths that I will also bring to the TAASA board are my ability to multitask and prioritize tasks in any environment, my capability of working in diverse work environments, my experience of creating and developing training plans; policies; procedures; and curriculums, as well as my desire to continue to learn.

3. List what goals, expertise and skill set you would bring to the TAASA board if elected.

A goal that I would bring to the TAASA board is to advocate for education and training as early as possible for our youth because the statistics reflect that many of our youth have been affected (directly and indirectly) by Sexual Assault. Another goal would be to find strategies on how to increase awareness, education, prevention, and advocacy throughout the state in youth-serving organizations. With my expertise and skill set as a Youth Drug Prevention Educator, I know that I could assist TAASA on making a change in reference to the topic of Sexual Assault and Substance Abuse if elected.