

Todd Finnerty, Psy.D.

Bio

What were you thinking when you nominated me for president a third time? Thank you! When deciding who you'll rank #1 ask yourself "do I want to help make changes at APA?" Every major election has advocates and agitators; sometimes they're right. I hope you'll read this and conclude that I am too.

You may have nominated me because I'm an agent of change. For example, I advocate for **licensure equality**; any licensed psychologist should be able to apply for jobs. You may have nominated me because I've got something you can't put on your CV— I've got guts.

Some misguided APA leaders may judge my outward appearance and jump to the conclusion that I don't represent diversity. However, I'm the only candidate representing people who are mistreated, microaggressed and marginalized by misguided APA leaders. I love my daughter and want a better future for women; I'm also fighting for a better present for the women who right now can't even apply to our largest employers. I'll be a new kind of APA president: I'll be the first APA President who personally experienced and survived the internship crisis.

We've seen what misguided APA leaders can do in the name of our association; they ultimately hurt our association. In the wake of the Hoffman Report I'm the most credible candidate; I spoke up. I'm the only candidate in this election who signed the petition to annul the PENS report. My time as APA President won't be about healing; it'll be about surgery on APA. I'll seek transparency, accountability and substantial changes, including empowering members to prevent future abuses.

You may have nominated me because I'm educating the public about psychology through the Public Education Campaign. You may have nominated me because APA has spent years training me to work effectively with the media and to speak to the public about psychology; I know the job. I'll educate the public as APA President too.

You may have nominated me because in 2012 I stood before the Council and said "I'm running for APA President because-- we can do better." I also proposed "Advancing Psychology through Innovation." You may have enjoyed proposals like:

- Let's end our reliance on the DSM-5 and publish free diagnostic guidelines based on the ICD.
- Let's publish annual reports monitoring insurance company practices.
- Let's allow psychologists to join APAPO without joining APA.
- Let's stop selling our soul for prescription privileges.
- Let's give members free electronic access to all APA journals.
- Our science needs transparency too. Let's reduce publication bias and open up our data.
- Let's make results from preregistered replication studies and research without significant findings more accessible.
- Let's humbly offer greater collaboration with APS, an organization founded with legitimate complaints against APA.

However, we know from history that not all change is good. Let's stop celebrating overreaching pay-for-performance reforms; they don't let all psychologists succeed and hurt our small businesses. I'll defend our fee-for-service practices. I won't be silent; I'll stand and fight.

BALLOT STATEMENT

America and Guns

Guns are a dangerous, enduring part of our society. Guns and mental health have become heatedly intertwined in our national politics; the next APA President should understand both. I understand guns; I'm a gun owner myself. We can advance realistic and meaningful violence prevention. We can prevent violence while respecting individual freedoms and without stigmatizing people with mental illness.

Credibility on Torture and Internships

I listened to the voices APA leaders should've listened to. In 2012 I wrote "APA's position should never be even in a gray area when it comes to human rights." I'm the only candidate who signed the petition to annul PENS. I spoke up; meanwhile one of the other presidential candidates appears in the Hoffman Report in a concerning manner. Meanwhile, APA has already spent more on Mr. Hoffman's law firm than APA spent over 3 years to help create internships.

The Man with No Name

I'll let Clint Eastwood describe my deep feelings for the survivors of the internship crisis. In *Fistful of Dollars* Clint's character turns away from his self-interest and helps out a family in trouble. They ask why and he says "*because I knew someone like you once, and there was no one there to help.*"

My heart goes out to people who are going unmatched in the internship match or accepting internships which aren't APA-accredited. I knew someone like them once; now I'm here to help. Like many midcareer and early career psychologists I'm a survivor of the internship crisis. The members of an entire generation of psychologists have been partially defined by their experiences within or outside an internship match. Creating more future internship positions can only be one piece of our response to the decades-long internship crisis; responding to the internship crisis also must mean supporting those who have survived it. While some APA leaders want to continue insulting a large percentage of the newer generation of psychologists, given that APA membership is in steep decline they'll have to ask themselves one question-- "do I feel lucky?"

I Advise You to Start Drinking Heavily

So two psychologists walk into a bar; the bartender says "before I let you come in here you have to tell me if you had an APA-accredited internship or not." The first psychologist says "yes" and he bellies up to the bar. The second psychologist says "no," and she has to leave because they don't serve psychologists who didn't have APA-accredited internships. There's nothing funny about automatically rejecting psychologists who didn't have APA-accredited internships. The many survivors of the internship crisis who pursued their passion to help others in need and who matched to non-APA internships aren't laughing now either; they've come to feel demeaned and devalued by misguided APA leaders and policies related to APA-accredited internships. It's not surprising that APA is bleeding members; we're tired of feeling like the butt of the joke.

I'm an Irish-American and when my ancestors came to this country they were met with inappropriate jokes and ads that said "No Irish Need Apply;" now everyone is Irish on St. Patrick's Day. I'm looking forward to a day when the many survivors of the internship crisis aren't met with job ads that say they're unwelcome and that they need not apply because their internship wasn't APA-accredited. Requiring an APA-accredited internship does not set a high standard and does not protect the public. When two psychologists walk into a bar together with the same psychology license they should each receive fair and equal treatment.

Supporting Older Psychologists too

So what can we do? Check out the advertising guidelines in the Monitor. You'll see that under Equal Employment Opportunity the use of the term "recent Ph.D." isn't allowed on the basis that it's "potentially age-discriminatory." I believe requiring an APA-accredited internship is also potentially age-discriminatory. Based on APPIC's own statistics older applicants are significantly disadvantaged in the match. Their match rates are even dramatically lower than people who reported having geographic restrictions. These match rates don't even consider that having APA-accredited internships was much less prevalent in the past when many older psychologists trained. This indicates a potential that older psychologists may be disproportionately impacted by a requirement for an APA-accredited internship. Our psychological associations should no longer accept classified ads for jobs requiring APA-accredited internships on the grounds that they are potentially age-discriminatory. I'm calling on our associations to stop accepting classified ads for any job that requires an APA-accredited internship. APA should support all psychologists, including older psychologists.

Our Cup of Christ

Some APA leaders spend too much time advancing their own ill-conceived agendas instead of the interests of the public and psychologists. Over its relatively short existence APAPO has misspent millions of our dollars pursuing prescription privileges. However, "me-too" prescribing under the supervision of a physician isn't innovative. When questing for prescription privileges is the priority for APAPO it's hard to feel valued. It's hard to feel valued when APAPO misspends millions on prescription privileges but won't defend psychologists who didn't have APA-accredited internships. Our inability to work at psychology's largest employers gets ignored.

As they crusade for prescription privileges our associations use talking points that emphasize a shortage of psychiatrists; however, the VA now reports that they have a shortage of psychologists. We are experiencing a psychologist shortage and it's harder to access psychotherapy than a pill. In fact, under APAPO's watch pharmacotherapy has expanded while psychotherapy has decreased. Let's advocate for psychological services instead of wasting millions of our dollars promoting pills.

Members Matter

I'm not blindly infatuated with APA, but I do care strongly about APA members. That's why I've run for president three times. I believe members matter. You can call me on my cell (330)495-8809, tweet @DrFinnerty or email toddfinnerty@toddfinnerty.com. It's not "*an APA for all members*" if some members get maligned and treated like they don't matter. It's not "*an APA for all members*" unless we respect *all* psychologists.

Q&A in the APA Monitor

1. How will you integrate/reflect APA's commitment to diversity in all of your presidential endeavors?

We all belong to the same species. However, it's no secret that throughout history different groups have clashed. I believe respecting all psychologists, including those from underrepresented groups, begins with caring about each other. Let's care about each other. The caring and passion I feel commit me to the many who are microaggressed and marginalized within APA culture: the survivors of the internship crisis and other psychologists without APA-accredited internships. APA has shown a commitment to some aspects of diversity; however APA must start caring and stop supporting the unjust treatment of psychologists without APA-accredited internships. Visit www.allpsychologists.org

2. There are multiple changes to APA's governance structure underway. What is one major opportunity this change offers the association.

The APA Council of Representatives now has the opportunity to correct unsupported, unscientific policies. Previously, Council rubber stamped some prepackaged policies with minimal scientific evidence or consideration. Two flawed policies passed by Council which weren't supported by science were the *Resolution on Accreditation for Programs that Prepare Psychologists to Provide Health Services* and *Health Service Psychology: Preparing Competent Practitioners*. These policies don't reflect good science, harm the public by reducing access to psychologists and infuriate a large number of psychologists by suggesting they're not competent because they didn't have an APA-accredited internship. Visit www.toddfinnerty.com

3. How do you envision increasing and enhancing the vitality of the association's membership?

APA is sick. This sickness threatens APA's vitality. APA has been bleeding members since even before I first ran for president in 2012. Why is APA sick? A large percentage of early and mid-career psychologists are survivors of the internship crisis; a large percentage survived the crisis through internships which weren't APA-accredited. To soothe its sickness, APA must end the infection spread by its lack of support for the survivors of the internship crisis, including psychologists who didn't have APA-accredited internships. One reason APA hasn't won over the next generation of psychologists is the public discourse of some APA leaders.

4. What role should APA undertake in the public discourse of political, legal, and social issues?

In their public discourse, APA leaders shouldn't regurgitate the talking points that APA-accredited internships are required for quality and protect the public. It clearly harms the public by reducing access to competent psychologists. Requiring APA-accredited internships isn't empirically supported and potentially discriminates against older applicants. The marketplace doesn't require APA-accredited internships; it accepts masters-level therapists and nurse prescribers. No politician will support laws requiring APA-accredited internships unless misguided psychological associations ask them to. APA's public discourse should be supportive of all psychologists, not just psychologists who had APA-accredited internships. If not, APA will continue to bleed-out members. Visit www.toddfinnerty.com.

5. What actions would you take to enhance the future of psychology in an era of increasing interdisciplinary education, research, and practice?

I'll confront a myth: we don't have an oversupply of psychologists. Sometimes people say this to derisively snipe at professional schools or because they're out-of-touch with the trenches. Our country has immense unmet behavioral health needs. There are long waitlists for treatment. This year the VA put psychologists on their list of top 5 occupations with the largest staffing shortages. Despite VA psychologists having good benefits and being paid more than astronauts, the VA is now reporting a psychologist shortage. We have an internship crisis but demand for predoctoral interns isn't the same thing as demand for psychologists.

6. How would your presidency work to expand international perspectives within APA and facilitate the internationalization of psychology in education, research, practice, and policy?

I'll respect all psychologists. APA's flawed internship policies essentially call psychologists outside the USA and Canada incompetent. Did our international colleagues around the world have an APA or CPA accredited internship? No, APA and CPA only accredit internships in the USA and Canada. These flawed APA policies aren't respectful and don't facilitate international perspectives in psychology. Psychology and psychologists don't just exist in the USA and Canada. It's absurd to suggest that all the psychologists around the world could only be competent if they trained in the United States or Canada. We should be more respectful of our international colleagues.

APAPO Questions

1. What do you believe are the most important opportunities and challenges facing professional practice in the next three to five years, and how would you address them?

Let's monitor and confront insurance company practices and publicize an annual report of our findings. Practicing outside the influence of insurance companies feels easier. However, psychologists shouldn't be driven away from participating on insurance panels simply because corporations delight and revel in making it onerous for psychologists to participate on insurance panels. Over the next three to five years we'll frequently talk about health care reform; talking about it must include talking about insurance company practices. We must ensure that insurers treat the public fairly under mental health parity. We must ensure that they are maintaining adequate networks of psychologists. Their beneficiaries shouldn't have to deal with long wait times or inadequate access to psychologists specializing in their presenting problems. It's unacceptable that some insurance panels are closed or require 3 to 5 years post-licensure before a psychologist can apply to it while their beneficiaries must call around endlessly and report trouble finding a psychologist who was available and who could take their insurance.

Another challenge facing a large percentage of psychologists is that too many employment opportunities require APA-accredited internships. We've all seen the ads. I want our professional associations to stop publishing classified ads that require APA-accredited internships.

2. What would you identify as your priorities for ensuring that psychologists will have a pivotal role, front and center, in leading and implementing health care reform?

APA leaders delight and revel in stating the obvious that psychologists "need a seat at the table." However, to the survivors of the internship crisis and psychologists without APA-accredited internships this rings hollow. It rings hollow when only some psychologists get to have a seat at the table and not all psychologists. It rings hollow when psychologists without APA-accredited internships are left without a chair when the music stops. It rings hollow when APAPO has spent millions pursuing prescription privileges yet remains silent while we can't even apply to our largest employers. Psychologists are one of the top 5 occupations with the largest staffing shortages at the VA yet our state licensure is treated as meaningless there. We deserve an APAPO that will speak for us. We shouldn't be left behind and APAPO's approach shouldn't be to sit back and watch us die.

My priorities also include my fellow small business psychologists. We shouldn't be left behind while large corporations take over. Let's not celebrate any pay-for-performance reforms which don't let our small businesses succeed; we know from history that change hasn't always been for the better. APAPO's approach shouldn't be to sit back and watch our small businesses die.

What do you feel should be the priority for APA in the next 12 months related to the findings of the independent review (Hoffman Report)?

To the Barbecue

Some people made mistakes; others acted in bad faith. However, this isn't about an isolated incident by a few bad apples. While everyone loves a good witch burning, there are malfunctioning systems within APA which must be brought to the barbecue. This isn't about national security; it's about misguided APA leaders repeatedly deceiving us and taking a hardline against the democratically-determined will of the membership. Misguided APA leaders have historically been able to place their ill-conceived agendas ahead of the will of the membership and the best interest of the public. Those brave upstarts who act as agents of change will respect and treat APA members better.

If it Weren't for You Meddling Kids

Many have fought for change. To psychologists like myself who have sought changes at APA for years the results of the Hoffman Report aren't surprising. Over the years we've been maligned and discounted as "*critics*." Many of my fellow critics should've been treated like the reformers, innovators and champions they are.

APA leadership has been a stagnant pool. I support efforts to open up the system and breathe new life into APA. Too many misguided APA leaders appoint each other to influential positions over and over in perpetuity. I believe most board and committee positions should be nominated and elected directly by the membership. Let's return more power to the members themselves and create a more transparent APA with accountability to members. Unfortunately, right now members can't even tell how their Council Representatives voted on most issues. This must end; secret voting isn't a characteristic of a trustworthy democracy.

Credible Leadership

There are 5 out of 12 current APA board members, including our current APA president, who are already recused from dealing with the Hoffman Report. While we can feel compassion for misguided APA leaders who made mistakes, when necessary we must also hold them accountable for their folly. One of the other presidential candidates is mentioned multiple times in the Hoffman Report. How she'd respond to the Hoffman Report doesn't really matter much; she must be recused. If you elect her she should be recused from even dealing with the Hoffman Report. If you elect her there would be few people left mastering the ship on Hoffman Report reforms; she'd have to step aside like other APA leaders already have.

I'm the most credible candidate this year; reforming APA has already been my mission. I also listened to the voices APA leaders should've listened to. In 2012 I wrote "APA's position should never be even in a gray area when it comes to human rights." I'm the only candidate who signed the petition to annul the PENS report.

YOU are my Cause

APA isn't a lost cause; I believe you aren't a lost cause either. I believe members matter. It's not "*an APA for all members*" if some get maligned and treated like they don't matter. It's not "*an APA for all members*" unless we empower *all* psychologists. Visit www.allpsychologists.org