NAN President-Elect
2017 Candidate Statement

Tanya D'Avanzo, Ph.D., ABPP-CN

It is an honor to be nominated as a candidate for President-Elect of the National Academy of Neuropsychology (NAN). Our organization is thriving and strong. Looking forward, we will need to ensure that we capitalize on our strengths and keep pace with the changing course of health care.

I have served NAN for over 14 years, first as a member of the Membership Committee, then as a member of the Women in Leadership Committee, and for three years on the Executive Board as Member-at-Large. Currently, I am a trustee/treasurer of the NAN Foundation.

For decades, I have been actively involved in both practice and leadership roles to advance our profession. As past President of the Hawaii Psychological Association (HPA), I gained first-hand knowledge about how to advocate for our field. I lobbied on Capital Hill in Washington, D.C. for mental health parity and helped found HPA's first Political Action Committee. I initiated regular social networking events and witnessed a surge in membership. Later, I was chosen as a chairperson of the behavioral health advisory board to the state's largest private insurer. For my efforts, I was awarded HPA's Distinguished Service Award.

I have worked as a full-time clinical neuropsychologist since 1998, and attained board certification in 2001. My private practice serves a broad range of needs in the community. I consult with multiple hospitals (rehabilitation, private, state and VA) and in multiple settings (acute, sub-acute and forensic). For over a decade, I supervised psychology interns at the Department of Veterans Affairs, where I ran the Neuropsychology Service as a consultant. I have adjunct appointments at two universities in Honolulu, and am the training director for the Neuropsychology Post-Doctoral Fellowship at a rural comprehensive health center. My research has focused primarily on memory and language changes in normal aging and in neurodegenerative disorders, but I have also written and presented on topics ranging from pre-operative assessment techniques for intractable epilepsy to cognitive rehabilitation for those with traumatic brain injury. My research has been funded with grants for which I independently qualified. Trained as a scientist/practitioner, I see NAN as the bridge between these two aspects of neuropsychology.

If elected as NAN President, I will work to:
- **Ensure** that neuropsychology is seen as a crucial component of health care
- **Expand** networks and connectivity amongst NAN committees and members
- **Engage** members from diverse points of view and create paths to leadership

Dr. D'Avanzo is a member of the following organizations:

American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology (Member), American Psychological Association/Divisions 40 & 22 (Member), Hawaii Psychological Association (Member), International Neuropsychological Society (Member), National Academy of Neuropsychology (Member - Fellow)

Candidate Positions on the Issues
Tanya D'Avanzo, Ph.D., ABPP-CN

1.   How does your background qualify you for this office?

I have wide-ranging experience in the field of neuropsychology and within NAN, and have been actively involved in volunteer and leadership positions throughout my career. I have served NAN for over 14 years, first as a member of the Membership Committee, then on the Women and Leadership Committee, and last year I completed a three-year term on the Executive Board as Member-at-Large. I have also been active in the NAN Foundation; in 2008, I acted as the organizer for the NAN Foundation fundraising event at Rockefeller Center in New York City, and I am currently a Trustee of the Foundation, serving as Treasurer. My history of strong and effective working relationships within NAN has provided me with a distinct understanding of the organization's needs and aims.

In terms of my training, I received my doctorate in clinical psychology from the UCSD/SDSU Joint Doctoral Program in 1997 (neuropsychology track). For four consecutive years, I was a recipient of the McDonnell Pew Centers for Cognitive Neuroscience Fellowship, based in San Diego at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies. Before that, I graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Tufts University with a Bachelor of Science in biopsychology.

My leadership skills and professional volunteerism have been publicly recognized; I served as President of the Hawaii Psychological Association (HPA), was a recipient of the HPA's Distinguished Service Award (2007), and was chosen to participate in APA's Leadership Institute.

2.   What do you see as the major challenges to neuropsychology in the next 5 years? How do you believe NAN, under your leadership, can be effective in meeting these challenges?

This is a time of transition and uncertainty in health care. NAN can assist the field and its members by keeping us abreast of the changes and challenges of this time, and by ensuring that our practice is seen as a crucial component of health care. From my experience on the NAN Executive Board, I have a clear sense of how our PAIC and LAAC committees can help us to achieve these goals and to lobby for our professional needs. I have direct experience with lobbying for our field, on both the state and national levels.

As our field grows, we must learn how to promote and communicate about our work effectively. NAN offers us a place to come together, and we need leaders who can articulate both challenges and solutions. We need to bring diverse points of interest together. I have a track record of being able to do this, and with positive results.

The spread of information is quick and constant in our society, and our organization should serve as a trusted voice for reliable and factual communications. By working with the NAN Foundation and our social media committee, we can aim to make our work understood by the general public and disseminate information broadly so that it can be useful to society while keeping our members aware of the happenings in our field.

3.   How would you promote professional practice?

The need for our practice is clear to us, but we need to make sure that referring parties and medical insurers understand what we do, and how critical our work is. On way of doing this is by translating current science into practice. I would like to see more discussion of creating ways of practicing in the face of changing health care models. I would continue to fine work of NAN to create an online database that can be accessed easily by members through the NAN website with reference articles showing the efficacy of our work. We need to continue to focus on providing high-quality conferences and web-based educational offerings. We should also continue to work with other professional organizations to meet common goals, while maintaining NAN's unique focus and identity. The training of the next generation of practitioners and leaders will determine the future success of our practice. I support NAN's efforts to include students in multiple

ways within the organization, and would enhance the creation of paths to leadership through sponsorship and mentorship programs.

4.   How do you plan to bridge science and practice?

My training and perspective are firmly grounded in the scientist-practitioner model. All of the efforts of NAN, from education to practice to lobbying and promotional efforts should reflect this integration. Our organization has multiple methods for gathering and disseminating scientific knowledge, including our journal (ACN), social media, web-based educational programs, our annual conference, and the NAN Bulletin. I am greatly encouraged by the high-quality work we have promoted, and would support using each of these methods, individually and in concerns, to keep our organization on the forefront of science and practice.