

## Distinguished Alumni

**Q&A with Former DIII YPC Representatives:** These interviews are meant to take a candid look into the approach and point of views from previous representatives of District III's Young Professionals Committee.



### Ashley Long, PhD, LAT, ATC

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Above Picture: Dr. Ashley Long (right) with Dr. Kevin Talton (left).

### How does leadership apply to Young Professionals?

There are many distinct qualities of Young Professionals. Many of these are congruent with skills necessary to be a good leader. Young Professionals possess enthusiasm for the profession, vision and adaptability to change, and contagious energy. Leaders exist at many levels and the opportunities presented to members of the Young Professionals Committee allow them to use their skills as well as develop them for the future. Also, there are many instances when the NATA looks to the YPC for suggestions, support, and generation of new ideas. This, in itself, is leadership within our national organization.

### What takeaways do you have from working on the YPC?

There are so many talented, intelligent, and passionate athletic trainers volunteering their time to make our profession better. Being involved in the YPC and the NATA is an inspirational reminder that we are part of a unique profession that is filled with exceptional professionals. Learning to work in a group at a distance (over the district and country) is a great skill-building opportunity. This presents its own challenges, but distance group work is the essence of volunteering for the NATA.

### Can you talk about some issues that the YPC addressed during your tenure? What do notice about those issues now - has the problem gotten better or worse?

When I served on the YPC we executed several activities that contributed to positive change for a larger issue. For example, although the NATA is a healthy professional organization, there is a percentage of certified athletic trainers who choose not to join the NATA. In an attempt to display the value of membership in our professional organization, we organized Young Professionals to visit each of the athletic training education programs in our respective states to talk about involvement in the NATA, professionalism, and making the transition into clinical practice upon graduation. The work of the NATA and backbone that it provides to our profession is becoming more apparent to those entering the profession. I hope that our project helped those future athletic trainers see the importance of active service in the NATA.

**What would you say to a YP to get them involved with the profession?** Most have heard the quote from Mahatma Gandhi, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." This is my favorite quote and I believe that if we all put action behind our passion and beliefs there is no end to how great our profession, health care, and the world could

become. Everyone has a right to complain or see the obstacles, but that should be followed with positive suggestions and willingness to create the action steps that will result in change. Everyone has something to contribute. Unique skills, passions, and aptitude abound within athletic trainers. These can be used to continue to promote and improve our profession. We need everyone. Start volunteering locally and find a “volunteer mentor.” This person is someone involved in the state, district, or national organization from whom you can learn the system and network of individuals that are working to make this better.

**What experiences prepared you for your role with the YPC?** I have always been a person who “gets involved.” Therefore, skills like organization, planning, and communication prepared me for my role on the YPC. I learned these skills from student government and other committee work and I am *still* working on these things! I made a system on my calendar to remind me to remind others about deadlines and meetings. I created spreadsheets of contact information and tasks accomplished. I would change forms of communication depending on the person and circumstance, being adaptable to people’s needs.