

DISTRICT 103 TOASTMASTERS



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

2025-2026 SLATED CANDIDATES BROCHURE

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District Leadership Committee (DLC) Report

February 23, 2025

Greetings District Council Members of District 103 Toastmasters!

This is the official report of the 2025 District Leadership Committee (DLC).

We want to inform you that the following candidates have been slated for consideration of district leadership at the virtual Annual Meeting of the District Council on **Saturday, April 19, 2025**:

For District Director

Valerie Smith, DTM

For Program Quality Director

Latrina Oddo, DTM

For Club Growth Director

No Candidates to Slate

For Central South (B) Division Director

No Candidates to Slate

For Central North (C) Division Director

AlyceAnn Crump, DTM

For Central East (F) Division Director

No Candidates to Slate

For Central West (G) Division Director

No Candidates to Slate

For South (S) Division Director

No Candidates to Slate

See the pages of this "Slated Candidates Brochure" for biography information on each candidate.

In addition to the announcement of the slate, the 2025 District Leadership Committee wishes to inform you that District Council Members, such as yourself, can run from the floor for any of the positions above which did not have a candidate to slate. You can also encourage other club members and club leaders to run from the floor for these district leadership positions, too.

Floor candidates must declare their intent to run to the District Director no later than seven (7) days before the Annual Meeting of the District Council.

Qualified floor candidates must meet the qualifications described in the District Administrative Bylaws. [Click here](#) for details.

In addition, all qualified floor candidates will need to submit – by 11:59 p.m. on April 12 – a completed:

- [District Leader Agreement and Release Statement](#)
- [District Leader Biographical Information Form](#); and
- .JPG photograph (headshot preferred).

Qualified floor candidate paperwork must be submitted to the 2024-2025 District Director **Sandra Lane** at stlane1229@gmail.com.

Again, the 2025 DLC is pleased to present you with this official report announcing slated candidates for 2025-2026 District 103 leadership positions.

We thank you for the opportunity “...to find the best-qualified candidates possible to serve as district leaders.”

Warmest regards,

2025 District Leadership Committee (DLC)
Cassandra Lee, DTM, PDD, Chair
Gary Behrens, DTM
Geri Tucker, DTM
Ivory Gwin, DTM, PDD
JeTaun Shepherd, DTM
Mary Szabo, DTM

NOTE: *Club Presidents, Vice Presidents Education, and District Executive Committee (DEC) members are eligible to vote for slated candidates on Saturday, April 19 during the Annual Meeting of the District Council.*

Valerie Smith, DTM

SLATED CANDIDATE FOR: District Director



A Toastmaster Since: December 2011

Education:

- Distinguished Toastmasters (DTM)
- Visionary Communication 5 (VC5),
- Pathways Mentor Program
- Motivational Strategies 5 (MS5)
- Leadership Excellence (LDREXC), ACG, ALS

Toastmasters offices held and terms of service:

- President: 7/1/18 - 6/30/19 and 7/1/14-6/30/15
- Vice President of Education: 07/1/23- 06/30/2024, 7/1/17 -6/30/18 and 7/1/15 - 6/30/16
- VP of Membership: 07/1/22 to 6/30/2023, 7/1/19 to 6/30 2020 and 7/1/13-6/30/14
- VPPR: 7/1/21- Pres, 9/1/17-6/30/18, 7/1/16-6/30/17, 7/1/16 - 6/30/17, and 7/1/12 - 6/30/13
- Area Director: 7/1/16 – 6/30/17
- Public Relations Manager: 7/1/20-6/30/21 and 7/1/21- 6/30/2022
- Program Quality Director: 7/1/2024 – Present.

Toastmaster honors and designations:

- Awarded 2023 D103 Toastmasters Winter TLI Dean
- Appointed two terms as District PR Manager, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022
- Appointed Conference Chair for the first virtual annual conference in 2021
- Received the highest award recognition the Distinguished Toastmasters Award (DTM), Aug 2019
- Received Leadership Excellence (LDREXC), 2019: High Performance Leadership
- Created the Mentoring Development Program for my club South Loop Speak Freaks TM Club #7079

Relevant work experience and how it relates to Toastmasters and my role as a District officer:

As a Senior HR Operations Specialist, I excel in strategic planning by analyzing past initiatives to identify successes and address challenges, creating seamless strategies for improved efficiency and engagement. I take a holistic approach to support leaders in aligning with organizational goals and proactively driving solutions through collaboration and strategic questioning. A strong advocate for lifelong learning, I motivate my team members to build new skills and embrace growth opportunities. This expertise translates to Toastmasters leadership by enhancing district performance, empowering Area and Division Directors, and fostering leadership development, ensuring a cohesive and thriving district.

What experience do you have in strategic planning?

My experience in strategic planning as a Senior HR Operations Specialist includes utilizing design thinking to enhance processes and create people-focused solutions. I take a holistic view of the organization, ensuring leaders' roles align with district goals and empower them to serve members effectively. Through collaboration and proactive dialogue, I ask targeted questions to identify opportunities for smoother operations, growth, and engagement.

What experience do you have in the area of finance?

As a member of South Loop Speak Freaks Toastmasters Club #7079, I stepped in to assist when the Treasurer faced scheduling conflicts. I managed the club's budget in Excel, deposited membership dues and payments, processed membership fees with Toastmasters International, transferred funds from PayPal to the club's checking account, and sent reminders for dues payments. Additionally, my experience as a Financial Services Coordinator at a credit union involved balancing cash, checks, and

petty cash, completing daily reconciliation reports, ordering branch funds, and delivering cash and check deposits to the bank.

What experience do you have in developing procedures?

As the District 103 PR Manager, I developed the comprehensive District 103 PR Guide, covering all processes and tools used from July 2020 to June 2023. This guide streamlined district communications, ensured consistency, and provided clear instructions for PR team members. Similarly, in my role as a Senior HR Operations Specialist and HR Representative, I created and maintained procedure manuals, process workflows, and policy documents. These resources were designed to keep employees informed and ensure compliance with organizational regulations. By equipping teams with up-to-date knowledge, I facilitated smoother operations and enhanced productivity, fostering a culture of accountability and efficiency.

What lessons did you learn from previous leadership positions?

In previous leadership roles, I've learned the importance of putting people first by being an active listener and demonstrating authenticity. As the late Stephen Covey says, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood," which means truly understanding others' perspectives and fostering trust. I've learned that effective leadership requires showing up consistently, taking action, and owning commitments. Staying aligned with the organization's mission and core values is crucial for guiding decisions and empowering members. A leader must fully engage to inspire confidence, ensuring that people feel valued and motivated to grow.

Why do you want to serve as a District leader?

The reason I want to serve as District Director is to bring a positive impact to District 103 Toastmasters Club members. As the face of the district, I aim to engage and support our clubs in achieving EXCELLENCE! I live by my decree of putting the "T" in Toastmasters Excellence, guided by Dr. Ralph C. Smedley's framework that a club meeting should be socially fun, engaging, and focused on developing strong communicators and leaders through effective evaluations. The performance aim is to lead our clubs toward achieving the highest levels of distinction by equipping them with the tools needed to embody Toastmasters Club Excellence and achieve Club Success. As we charter new clubs, I am committed to providing them with the same support and opportunities for growth, ensuring they thrive just like our existing clubs.

In your opinion, what are the District mission's major objectives and how would you work to achieve them?

As District Director, my mission is to charter new clubs and ensure they receive the growth and support needed from District 103 to thrive. Equally important is supporting our existing Toastmasters clubs by helping them create a clear club success plan with measurable goals that align with the Distinguished Club Program. It's crucial for clubs to collaborate with their members to develop future leaders, that they empower to drive the club's success and growth. I am committed to ensuring that clubs not only achieve performance success, that club officers empower their club members to reach their goals in Pathways. By providing effective training for club officers, we can foster strong leadership and a vision that drives sustained success for both the club and its members.

Additional information about yourself:

Valerie's R.E.A.L. Talk Podcast was born from Valerie Smith, DTM's Motivational Strategy Path level 4 in Toastmasters. Launched on September 27, 2023, the podcast has since gained traction with over 60 episodes, focusing on real life experiences, covering leadership development, effective communication, change, future of work, mindfulness, technology, and real-world success strategies. Valerie's continued dedication to empowering others through the podcast reflects her commitment to leadership and lifelong learning. Click here to listen: <https://bit.ly/3WmdKbc>

Latrina Oddo, DTM

SLATED CANDIDATE FOR: Program Quality Director



A Toastmaster Since: June 2004

Education:

My educational background includes a Master of Business Administration (MBA, 2012), a Master of Public Administration (MPA, 2002), a Bachelor of Science in Finance (1996), and a Bachelor of Science in Economics (1993).

Toastmasters offices held and terms of service:

I have held various leadership roles within Toastmasters International, including serving as Vice President Membership (2013-2014), President (2015-2017), Vice President Education (2016-2017), Treasurer (2018-2019, 2024-2025), Secretary and SAA (2019-2020), and Vice President Public Relations (2020-2021), and various roles between 2022-2023 at the club level. I also served as Area Director G92 (2019-2020) and Central West(G) Division Director (2020-2021). At the district level, I held the position of Finance Manager for two terms (2021-2023), Administration Manager (2023-2024) and currently serve as the Club Growth Director (2024-2025).

Toastmaster honors and designations:

I am a Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM), awarded in 2023. My leadership experience within Toastmasters includes serving as a New Club Mentor (2021), Youth Leadership Coordinator (two terms: 2019-2021), D103 Winter TLI Dean (2020), and holding various club officer positions, including President.

Relevant work experience and how it relates to Toastmasters and my role as a District officer:

Throughout my career in the transportation industry. I have developed a strong foundation in leadership and project management. My responsibilities have included leading and mentoring teams, managing small and large-scale projects, facilitating training workshops for new employees, collaborating effectively with leadership, customers, stakeholders, and cross-functional teams (including Training and Workforce), conducting quality inspections to ensure adherence to best practices, and managing programs and implementing strategies to improve overall customer experience. These experiences have not only honed my professional skills but also cultivated a strong sense of servant leadership within me.

What experience do you have in strategic planning?

At my work place, I support the Planning and Innovation department in the operations and activities of all Fare Systems, Innovations programs. This involves collaborating with contracts, vendors, and partners to facilitate the implementation and integration of system upgrades and improvements. A key aspect of my position is developing and executing initiatives to expand and improve the retail network, enhance customer experience around ridership and fare payment, and ultimately contribute to the overall strategic direction of the organization. I have created a 2023-2025 Strategic Plan for improving customer service and Retail enhancements.

What experience do you have in the area of finance?

I possess a strong foundation in finance, having earned a degree in the field and dedicated a significant portion of my career to its practice. My prior experience encompasses managing investment portfolios, overseeing banking arrangements, ensuring the secure custody of funds and securities, and managing payroll distribution. I have consistently maintained robust controls to mitigate the risk of fraud and ensure the accurate allocation of funds. I have performed daily portfolio analysis and executed investment strategies to ensure liquidity for short-term and long-term operational and business needs. I have also monitored and reconciled various journal entries and supporting bank account records. Furthermore, I have forecasted the organization's daily cash position and developed strategic investment plans.

What experience do you have in developing procedures?

I have developed and implemented policies and procedures that align with organizational goals and enhance operational efficiency. I developed a new attendance/administrative policy for Customer Service staff, resulting in a 50% increase in overall performance. I led the development of a comprehensive complaints routing process to ensure timely and effective resolution of customer inquiries. I streamlined customer-facing programs through the creation of efficient workflows and process improvements. I facilitated new hire training and coaching sessions, contributing to a 20% improvement in agent retention. I conducted thorough process analyses to identify areas for improvement and streamline operations.

What lessons did you learn from previous leadership positions?

This diverse experience has provided me with valuable insights into effective leadership, team building, and strategic planning. I have learned the importance of team collaboration- fostering teamwork by encouraging collaboration and supporting members in their goals. I've learned to continue moving forward even when the odds are against you.

Why do you want to serve as a District leader?

I am motivated to continue serving as a District leader. I am passionate about contributing to the district's mission and find fulfillment in empowering members and supporting clubs with the resources they need to succeed.

In your opinion, what are the District mission's major objectives and how would you work to achieve them?

I believe the District mission's major objectives are: 1) Serving and developing members 2) Maintaining fiscal responsibility 3) Building young leaders 4) Promoting club growth. To achieve these objectives, I would regularly assess the needs of clubs and offer support to enhance their membership and club experience. Promote best practices for member engagement and growth. Organize and promote educational events and recognize and reward member achievements. Implement systems for tracking club progress and the achievement of goals.

Additional information about yourself:

I am committed to fostering an environment that nurtures growth, encourages engagement, and upholds the Toastmasters mission of developing communicators and leaders.

No Candidate

SLATED FOR: Club Growth Director



No Candidate

SLATED FOR: Central South (B) Division Director



AlyceAnn Crump, DTM

SLATED CANDIDATE FOR: Central North (C) Division Director



A Toastmaster Since: April 2018

Education:

- DTM – 3 times
- Completed All 11 Pathway Paths – 3 Times

Toastmasters offices held and terms of service:

Currently I am serving as:

- President of 4 Clubs
- VPE of 12 Clubs
- VPM of 1 club
- VPPR of 3 Clubs
- Secretary of 2 clubs

Toastmaster honors and designations:

- Area Director of the Year
- Division Director of the Year
- Club Ambassador of the Year

Relevant work experience and how it relates to Toastmasters and my role as a District officer:

Public Speaking: As a minister, I have extensive experience speaking in front of congregations, which is a core aspect of Toastmasters. My ability to engage and inspire an audience can be a great asset.

Leadership: Leading a congregation involves guiding, mentoring, and supporting individuals, which is similar to the responsibilities of a Toastmasters District leader. My leadership skills can help me manage and motivate my team effectively.

What experience do you have in strategic planning?

Event Planning: Organizing services, community events, and outreach programs requires careful planning and coordination, similar to organizing Toastmasters meetings and events.

Vision and Goals: Setting a vision form congregation and working towards long-term goals is akin to setting objectives for my Toastmasters division and developing strategies to achieve them.

What experience do you have in the area of finance?

While finance isn't my specialty, I excel at identifying the right person for the job to ensure it gets done effectively.

What experience do you have in developing procedures?

Creating Service Protocols: Developing the order of service, including the structure of sermons, prayers, and other rituals, involves creating and refining procedures to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Administrative Processes: Managing the day-to-day operations of my ministry, such as handling membership records, and event planning, requires establishing clear and effective procedures.

What lessons did you learn from previous leadership positions?

- Adaptability
- Empathy and Understanding
- Effective Communication
- Conflict Resolution

Why do you want to serve as a District leader?

As a minister, my desire to serve as a Toastmasters District leader stem from a deep commitment to helping others grow and succeed.

In your opinion, what are the District mission's major objectives and how would you work to achieve them?

- Empowering Others
- Community Building
- Personal Growth
- Making a Difference: Sharing Your Experience

Additional information about yourself:

My background and skills can greatly benefit the Toastmasters organization, and in turn, I can gain valuable experiences that enhance my ministry and other aspects of my life.

No Candidate

SLATED FOR: Central East (F) Division Director



No Candidate

SLATED FOR: Central West (G) Division Director



No Candidate

SLATED FOR: South (S) Division Director





Who do you know that could Serve as an **Area Director** for D103?

Serving as an **Area Director** (AD) is a great next step for any current club officer, especially the Club President (PRES), Vice President Education (VPE), Vice President Membership (VPM) and/or Vice President Public Relations (VPPR).

When you serve as an **Area Director**, you will hold one of the District Executive Committee (DEC) roles. As an **Area Director**, you will:

- Serve as the direct liaison between the district and the clubs in your area,
- Conduct club visits with the clubs in your area – twice a year – to understand and support the clubs' needs; assess club membership growth; determine educational achievements of club members; and submit area visit reports online to Toastmasters International,
- Communicate regularly with your Club Presidents their club's status in the Distinguished Club Program,
- Motivate and assist each club in your area to become a Distinguished club or better,
- Hold at least two (2) Area Council meetings to address the needs of the clubs in your area; discuss the plans and goals of each club in the Distinguished Club Program; review attendance at club officer training; and provide club awards and recognition,
- Coordinate area speech contests,
- Discuss district training and other district events with the clubs in your area,
- Participate in Area Director training provided by the district,
- Attend District Executive Committee (DEC) meetings once per month; and
- Participate in division and district sponsored events throughout the club year.

Area Directors are eligible for re-appointment for one succeeding term only. Those who successfully complete a one-year term as **Area Director** will receive credit toward their Pathways Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) award.

For more information about the Area Director role, refer to the [District Leadership Handbook](#) and the [District Administrative Bylaws, Article VII: Officers](#) in the Governing Documents of Toastmasters International. Visit <https://www.toastmasters.org> to access these documents.

Know a club leader or club member who would make a great Area Director? Encourage them to serve your division as an Area Director for the 2025-2026 club year. Share this flyer and the competencies below with them.

Want to nominate yourself for an Area Director leadership role? Reach out to 2024-2025 District Director Sandra Lane at stlane1229@gmail.com. Include a completed [Candidate Application](#); [District Leader Agreement and Release Statement](#); [District Leader Biographical Information form](#); along with a .JPG photograph (headshot preferred).



Area Director Competencies

COMPETENCY CATEGORY	COMPETENCY	EVIDENCE OF COMPETENCY
Skills	Motivating people	Motivates members to set and achieve personal education and leadership goals
	Coaching and mentoring	Assists club officers to understand what is needed for the club to be at least Distinguished and to help club members achieve their goals
	Analytical skills	Provide feedback to clubs on club performance and progress in meeting needs of club members
Knowledge	Working knowledge of <i>District Leadership Handbook</i> (Item 222) and <i>Club Leadership Handbook</i> (Item 1310)	Fulfills Area Director reporting requirements to World Headquarters
Characteristics	Integrity	Observable in leader behavior
	Sincerity	
	Empathy	
	Honesty	
	Consideration for others	
	Service orientation	Supports club officers and members to achieve their goals
	Passion for mission and envisioned future of Toastmasters International	Clubs in the area successful in Distinguished Club Program
	Creativity	
	Enthusiasm	
Energetic		
Attributes	Respect	Observable in leader behavior
	Punctuality	
	Patience	
	Tact	
	Approachable	
	Commitment to success and mission of Toastmasters International	Success of clubs in Distinguished Club Program
	Goal oriented	
	Adaptive and willing to change when needed	High levels of club officer satisfaction with area services
	Proactive, anticipating issues before they arise	Minimum of unresolved contentious issues in the District
	Resourceful and knowing where to obtain resources	Club officers provided with ideas from Area Director to meet members' needs
	Diligent	Meets World Headquarters reporting requirements

RESOURCES FOR DISTRICT 103 LEADERS

Club Excellence Curriculum

<https://ccdn.toastmasters.org/medias/files/department-documents/club-documents/club-excellence-initiative-curriculum.pdf>

Club Leadership Handbook

<https://www.toastmasters.org/resources/club-leadership-handbook>

Club Membership-Building Programs of Toastmasters International

https://www.toastmasters.org/leadership-central/club-officer-tools/membership-building/membership-building-programs-for-clubs?utm_source=february_leader_letter&utm_medium=club_news&utm_campaign=grow_club

Club Officer Role Summary

https://www.toastmasters.org/leadership-central/club-officer-tools/club-officer-roles?utm_source=february_leader_letter&utm_medium=club_news&utm_campaign=club_officer_roles

Club Officer Role Tutorial

https://www.toastmasters.org/leadership-central/club-officer-tools/club-officer-roles?utm_source=february_leader_letter&utm_medium=club_news&utm_campaign=club_officer_roles

Club Officer Self-Evaluation

https://www.toastmasters.org/leadership-central/club-officer-tools/club-officer-roles?utm_source=february_leader_letter&utm_medium=club_news&utm_campaign=club_officer_roles

Distinguished Performance Reports

<http://dashboards.toastmasters.org/>

District Administrative Bylaws

<https://www.toastmasters.org/leadership-central/governing-documents>

District Executive Committee Roles

<https://www.toastmasters.org/leadership-central/district-leader-tools/leadership-roles/district-executive-committee-roles>

District Leadership Handbook

<https://www.toastmasters.org/Resources/District-Leadership-Handbook>

District 103 Toastmasters – <https://www.d103toastmasters.org>