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### **Why do you want to run for AMGA Board of Directors?**

Reflecting upon my most memorable adventures in the mountains, the experiences were more than summits, lines, and epic powder; it was about the people I shared them with. As an instructor, educator, and guide, I have the opportunity to enable others to push their personal limits and to help them create their own memorable experiences in the mountains.

I am writing to ask for your support for election to the AMGA Board of Directors. My vision for the future of the organization is focused on dedicating resources to increase the demand for AMGA Certified guides. The AMGA has successfully dedicated much of its energy in recent years to strengthening its Brand and to building world-class training and certification programs. I would like to leverage those successes to stimulate demand for AMGA Guides within the US. One approach to increasing the demand for certified guides is to educate the public at large, and targeted user groups in particular, about the value of working with a Certified AMGA Guide. An increase in market demand will translate to opportunities for certified guides in terms of increased access, employment opportunities, and wages.

### **What are your qualifications?**

I believe that my experience and background will provide a unique perspective on the Board. I have worked at the Colorado Mountain School since 2006 as an on-call guide, primarily in our avalanche education and ski programs. Working for a guide service with year-round operations, a full time staff, and an even larger seasonal staff has provided a foundation for understanding the current issues that the industry and individual guides face every day. In addition to CMS, I am a founding scientist at OPXBIO - a biotech company located in Boulder focused on novel biological routes to making chemicals that would otherwise come from petroleum. Life at a start-up company has taught me many things. Some of the more memorable lessons include: the difference between leadership and management (i.e. someone who inspires you to expand your own horizons vs. someone you read about in a Dilbert Comic); the importance of the timely resolution of conflicts – before it can adversely affect trust between individuals; the reality that indefinitely delaying a difficult decision is in fact choosing to maintain the status quo. Over the years, I've also worked to develop the ability to effectively communicate with a wide variety of stakeholders, from clients to venture capitalists, to senior program managers at the Department of Energy. This

will be a valuable skill as an AMGA Board member.

**How will you work with the board of directors?**

The Board of Directors is a representation of the AMGA membership at large – a diverse group of personalities who are passionate about their lives and profession and who are all dedicated to improving opportunities for guides in the US. In working with any group of individuals, it is imperative to establish common ground and to be mindful that fundamentally we are all working towards the same goals. When conflicts arise – as they often do when consensus is required from a diverse group – the team can return to that common ground as a basis for negotiating win-win solutions.

**Would you give an example where you have shown good participative management skills?**

OPXBIO is a recipient of a competitive \$6.2M grant from the Department of Energy (DoE) to develop a novel process to create diesel fuel using only hydrogen and carbon dioxide as the feedstock. As the Project Leader for this program, I have successfully managed across diverse work streams within the organization to ensure completion of project milestones on time and on budget. I am also responsible for managing the relationships with our external partners on this program, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), and Johnson Matthey, a global specialty chemicals company. The OPXBIO program has consistently been recognized by the DoE as one of their top performers.

**What do you consider one of your biggest failures and what did you do to over come this?**

One of the most insightful trainings that I have completed looked at the different ways that individuals naturally process information, communicate, interact, and ultimately make decisions. This particular approach utilized four categories to classify thinking styles: Conceptual, Analytical, Structural, and Social. I learned that I have a preference for the Conceptual and Analytical thinking styles and that I relate well to the Structural style, but that I have almost no affinity for the Social style of thinking. This identified a major blind spot for me – basically that there was a whole group of people who I struggled to communicate with because of our differences in thinking styles. Since that training, I have worked to overcome this limitation and to be able to effectively communicate with all individuals and groups, regardless of their thinking style preference.

**What are the key strategic issues facing the industry, profession and the AMGA Board? How do you believe the board should respond?**

One of the fundamental issues facing the industry is the current level of market demand for Certified Guides. There are likely a number of cultural, societal, and economic drivers that contribute to the level of demand, but the path that I propose to increasing demand is independent of a particular cause. For individual professionals, the economic viability of mountain guiding as a profession in the US is one of the key challenges faced by aspiring guides today. Simply put, it can be difficult to make a living as a mountain guide in the US.

I believe that the Board has an opportunity to address both of these issues concomitantly. A focused effort of marketing, outreach, and education to specific user groups to inform and influence them regarding the value proposition for the services provided by AMGA Certified Guides would significantly increase market demand. I believe that as more clients, service providers, and land managers recognize the value offered by AMGA Certified Guides, they will begin to require Certification as a part of permitting access on public and private lands and be willing to pay a premium for Certified Guides. Of course, this all must be accomplished while further enriching the AMGA brand recognition and maintaining the world-class caliber of the training and certification programs.

**Describe an incident when you led through significant conflict on an important principle. How will this influence your participation on the Board?**

One of the functional groups at OPXBIO was underperforming with respect to the quality of the data that they were generating which was in turn adversely affecting the pace of development of a key program. To further complicate the situation, the relationships between the key players were suffering from a lack of trust and a history of unresolved conflicts. I was one those key players. I had made several failed attempts to improve the technical problems, but in those efforts I had neglected to address the relationship problems. Even though the proposed technical solutions were sound, they were being perceived as antagonistic on a personal level by one of the other individuals involved.

I learned two principle lessons through the course of this incident that have improved how I approach problem solving and working in teams. The first lesson is the importance of maintaining working relationships and trust and not letting them degenerate due to unresolved conflicts. The second lesson is that technical savvy alone is not sufficient to effectively influence people. To successfully affect change within any team, you need both a sound idea and the ability to appeal to all of the different personality types involved.

**How will you handle the time commitments required for this role?**

If you were to ask the people who know me best, they would say that when I commit to something, I only know how to give 100%. Despite the cliché, I honestly believe that if something is worth doing, it's worth doing well. I would apply this same mentality to my responsibilities with the AMGA Board of Directors.

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