**Cynthia Uviedo**

**Candidate Statement**

When I was a child and teenager, I was quiet and reserved, and generally a follower. I looked at those who were leaders in my classes or in extracurricular activities, and admired them for their confidence. I knew I wanted to be a leader too, I just had to find the right opportunity. At the end of my freshman year in high school, I tried out for “squad leader” for my pep squad team, but was not selected. I looked for other opportunities to lead. I joined my school’s newspaper staff during my sophomore year. At the end of that year, I applied to be the business and advertising manager for the newspaper, and was excited to be selected for this position. I continued to expand my leadership experience by becoming the newspaper’s managing editor my senior year.

When I arrived on my college campus (at Trinity, where I now work), I decided that I wanted to be involved in campus activities and be a leader. I joined a multi-cultural organization that provided support for students of color. I also was a student-worker in the student government office, and worked closely with older students who were campus leaders. My sophomore year, I joined the student government association and became one of the leaders in the multi-cultural group. My junior year I served as president of the multi-cultural group, and was asked to run as the VP candidate for student government, which I turned down because I had already accepted the other position. Through these leadership experiences as a student, I learned more about myself and how I motivated and managed others. I also learned that you didn’t necessarily need to have a title to be a leader. Being a leader is about knowing what needs to get done to move an organization forward, and being willing to do it and to show others what to do.

After graduation, I joined a professional organization and after about a year, joined their board. Since that time, I have actively sought leadership positions (both professionally and in my volunteer work) because I enjoy being active and contributing to groups. When it was first proposed to bring an ODK Circle to our campus, I quickly reached out to the person who was leading the effort. I not only wanted to be part of a group that recognized leadership on campus, but also wanted a way to connect with students personally which I had limited opportunities to do previously. I have a collaborative approach to leadership. I seek input from those I manage and work with to make informed decisions. Over the years, I have realized that I enjoy leading in various ways because it provides me the opportunity to grow and improve organizations that are meaningful to me.

I am appreciative of my ODK experience and want to give back to this organization with my time and talents. I seek appointment to the ODK National Advisory Council to help provide vision for the future of this organization. On the council, I would provide a voice for Circles at smaller schools where students are involved in many facets of college life, and where it can be difficult to get students’ attention. I would appreciate the opportunity to network on behalf of our Circle with leaders from other schools to learn from them on ways to continue to improve our Circle. For example, I’d like to hear how other Circles identify and utilize their alumni members. One thing we can improve is developing more programming and structure for engaging faculty and staff members. I would also like to help the National Office identify more funding to help offset membership dues for students who cannot afford the dues. I know that if Trinity had an ODK Circle when I was a student, I would not have been able to join due to the cost. I recently learned of the “Gift of Membership” available which we used to help a member join. I would like to help grow that so it is available for more deserving students.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit my qualifications for this nomination. Thank you for your consideration.