

Candidate Name:

Emily Tarr, Midwestern University-Arizona College of Dental Medicine '25

How do you work with or lead a team?

When contemplating leadership or collaboration, understanding the dynamics of a team is crucial. I excel in adapting to diverse team cultures while fostering passion and curiosity amongst my colleagues. As a leader, I am actively engaged with each positional tier, aiming to enhance member experience and cultivate a sense of ownership in each member's efforts. I believe colleagues who are passionate about their role perform better, yielding superior outcomes. Effective leadership requires a commitment to supporting the team's substantial efforts and encourages diverse perspectives. Transparent communication, action plans, and timelines frame expectations and responsibilities to organize the team into individualized roles that cultivate creativity. Providing a structured approach boosts morale and productivity, as it minimizes stagnation, increases motivation, and mitigates burnout. Lastly, self-reflection is a crucial aspect of effective leadership and teamwork. Evaluating how I could have improved outcomes for the team requires time and practice. It's easy to place blame externally, but true growth involves acknowledging mistakes. Fostering a team environment where members uplift each other requires honesty and humility. Learning from failures requires reflection on errors or poor outcomes with open communication in a professional and constructive manner. I recognize that, as an ASDA national leader, I will be looked up to not only within my designated role but in every aspect of my person. If given the opportunity, I am committed to embodying a leadership style that is professional and encourages each member to shine – a leader driven to affect the organization in a positive way.

What leadership experiences have equipped you for the President/VP role?

My experiences serve as a collective, each offering unique insights that have prepared me for leadership opportunities. It's challenging to label one experience over another, but I believe my time as a team member has been the most influential. This allowed me to immerse myself in the culture of the organization and prepared me to confidently step into a leadership position. I've had the privilege of serving as the Midwestern University–AZ Chapter President, navigating through numerous highs and lows. Balancing these experiences while driving our vision forward has been a central focus of our current executive committee. Although our chapter has achieved remarkable success, what truly matters is the shared enthusiasm for ASDA and their eagerness to do more for our members. I believe success is evident when my team is collectively seeking ways to contribute, asking, "How can I do more? What can I do to get involved?" ASDA, in essence, should be enjoyable and serve as motivation to evolve as professionals. My role in ASDA is to be an effective leader but I will only succeed if I have inspired the next wave of students to continue ASDA's legacy and advocate for our profession. My focus is fostering an environment where the organization is not just a platform for leadership but a catalyst for personal and professional growth. This mindset aligns with my vision that ASDA is not just an association but a dynamic force propelling its members toward becoming exemplary clinicians and leaders.

What are 2-3 issues important to dental students and/or the position of President/VP?

Nationally, there's a decline in engagement in organized dentistry, and I see a unique opportunity for ASDA to cultivate future leaders and propel the field forward. ASDA often serves as the first exposure for students to the power of collaboration between like-minded individuals, offering a platform for student

doctors to influence the profession. The collective impact on dental education, however, hinges on our grassroots engagement, specifically within our chapters. Drawing on my experience as a chapter president, I recognize the pivotal role chapters play in inspiring passionate individuals to the mission of ASDA. I intend to leverage this perspective to shape our vision for the future of organized dentistry. Furthermore, there is a noticeable gap between national-level strategic planning and what happens at the chapter level. While respecting chapter autonomy, I advocate for increased guidance from the national level, supporting each chapter in cultivating a strategic plan. This collaborative effort aims to bridge the gap between national and the chapters. In addition, there is a lack of preparation in chapter leaders when transitioning from one leadership term to the next. To address this, I propose exploring the possibility of a national training retreat or integrating a robust training seminar into the Annual conference. Topics that would be helpful to cover include, cultural humility training, strategic planning, chapter finances, vendor fair, and a leadership 101 course. Overall, by enhancing the structure and relationships between the national, district, and chapter levels, we can create a more cohesive and inclusive organization.