

Candidate Name:**Natalie Benkandil, Medical University of South Carolina College of Dental Medicine '25****How do you work with or lead a team?**

Throughout my life, both personal and professional, I have gained experience working with various teams, learning that no two teams are alike. I tackle team settings by not only evaluating and setting my own goals but challenging my team to do the same. Leading is not only wanting personal success but striving to elevate the team. As district 4's trustee, I work with a team every day. My cabinet is constructed of 30 members who help me fulfill the goals of the district. I ensure that we meet monthly to discuss our successes, initiatives, and goals as well as provide them a space to ask questions. I encourage my team members to problem solve within their small groups and come to me when needing additional support and direction. I believe that the key to a successful team is to have open lines of communications. I am a leader that prefers to work alongside my teammates rather than strictly delegate. I meet one on one with our wellness, advocacy, and pre-dental chairs to ensure they have all the resources for their respective initiative months for them to be successful. My whole team knows that I am a call away and reach out often as I love building those relationships knowing that is how we will succeed as a team

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

I have had the privilege of taking on various leadership roles equipping me for the President position. My involvement began during my undergraduate degree as a member quickly growing in my passion for the organization and community. Since my initial involvement in ASDA as a pre-dental student, I have served at every level providing me with the insight and knowledge to enhance the organization and allow me to be qualified for this position. The key leadership experience that has prepared me for the role of President is serving as the District 4 trustee. As trustee, you hold many leadership roles and wear various hats. You are the connection between local chapters, the district, and the national level. I served as the trustee of the biggest district within our organization which includes 8 dental school across 5 states. Because of my previous role on D4's Cabinet as Director of Membership, I knew how to change gears fast and often to aid and help my team members in various ways. For example, the pre-dental chairs on my cabinet had many questions about their role. I was able to use past experiences to provide detailed information from not only holding a position on the pre-dental committee but also the director overseeing that position previously. Understanding the struggles and challenges of a trustee, I can serve the Board of trustees with guidance and advice. I humbly believe that these experiences have equipped me for the position as President.

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

As a dental student, I feel passionate about these three issues including loans, licensure, and cooperation with school administration. Firstly, student loans affect every dental student nationwide and continue to increase drastically. I was lucky enough to advocate for dental students on this topic by presenting the bill, the REDI Act, at National State Lobby Day to state legislatures in DC. This issue is pertinent as it is deterring dental students from specializing due to the increase in loan accruals as one enters residency. Secondly, the topic of a uniform licensure exam is still not agreed upon by all states.

ASDA's L1 policy on licensure provides the most ideal and ethical way to produce the exam. As clinicians, we vow to help those in need of dental assistance not further decline their oral health. In getting ASDA's L1 policy passed at a legal level, we can reduce the unethical and corrupt nature of harming those who we chose to help. Finally, the acceptance and support of ASDA on campuses by school administrations. ASDA is such an essential organization for the dental field allowing students to have a voice in their education and future. Unfortunately, many campuses don't promote membership of our organization leading to a decrease in involvement, knowledge, and greatly impacting our autonomy as dentists.