

Canidate Name: Ammaar Tajani

How do you work with or lead a team?

My leadership style is based off my past experiences and has evolved over my life. The greatest lesson I have learned in terms of leadership is the value of meeting the people I work with on their level, value their strengths, and have the team that works with them help guide them through their weaknesses. I believe there is a certain value in understanding your weakness as it allows individuals to tailor their growth and better communicate when they need help and where this help lies. Traditionally, I have seen that the usual path for leadership involves either a hands-on approach or a hands-off approach, but I have found that the balance between the two is the best way to handle it. I recall a specific experience of leadership that has best defined my leadership acumen. Two summers ago, I was tasked with running a twenty-day summer camp where I was in charge of 24 counselors. This experience in leadership showed me how communication cannot be a one-size-fit-all style. I also found that leadership has to be tailored to the schedule. In the case of the camp, as the schedule became more intense, I found myself micro-managing more. This ultimately was not effective to the counselors as they felt it added more stress. Because of this, I realized what I needed to do was not to be there and consistently check-in but keep myself open to leaders to be a resource to help and advise.

What leadership experiences have equipped you for the District Trustee role?

My commitment to community and diversity at BUGSDM has best prepared for the role of District 1 Trustee. During my time in dental school, I have served in multiple positions for the American Student Dental Association within the chapter and district level. On the chapter level, my work as Legislative Liaison, and now Vice President, has given me an incomparable experience with leadership and policy. It has helped me grow both as an individual and leader. Being able to attend conferences for advocacy, such as lobby day, has allowed me to learn more about the greater systems that influence and ultimately dictate the way dentistry is practiced within the United States. This uniquely is suited for trustee as it will allow me to have an analytical look at all dental schools under my purview on a more holistic level, being able to see how the larger systems affect dental care within the programs. On the district level, I served as chair for sponsor management and as an events member. With this experience I worked closely with the previous trustee to plan and implement district conference on a logistical and tangible level. This first hand experience will allow me to use my past experience to plan district meeting efficiently and effectively. My time with ASDA has not only provided me with the skills to be a strong observer and leader, but also helped me become more adaptive and creative in my work and solutions.

Why are you interested in the District Trustee role and what do you hope to accomplish in this position?

The district 1 trustee role excites me because of its ability to bring all five schools together to create strong relationships in terms of networking and leadership growth. I think back on my experience with district ASDA incredibly fondly as I think about not only the friendships I have made, but how the district has helped me through mentorship, experience, and made me a more informed member of the dental community. The most impactful portion of my district experience was ensuring that district meeting ran effectively and seeing the value it brought to the members of our districts, who not only learned from speakers but also were able to learn from other members of the district and bring that knowledge to their respective schools. As trustee, I aim to have three layers to my accomplishments. On the chapter

level, I will create strong relations with each school by ensuring my cabinet has diverse representation from each program. This allows us to tailor our work and make sure each program has a voice and is included within the planning processes. On a second level, I want to make sure both of our flagship events, boat cruise and district meeting are planned efficiently and effectively. This means making sure the events can be attended by all and caters to each of our students. Finally on the national level I want to advocate for our students and make sure their voices are heard to the ADA and to stakeholders to their future.

What are 2-3 issues important to dental students?

The dental field is evolving, and as leaders, we must adapt our leadership to serve the dental students we work with in order for them to have a strong foundation for success. The first issue we must tackle is student well being while in school. As school becomes increasingly difficult and saturated in the field, we must work to make sure students have the resources to help them feel supported. This involves making sure there are mental health resources are provided to our students and there is an outlet for their voices to be worked by administration. I also believe the greatest threat to our future involves the financial constraints that are placed on us due to the burden of student loans. As we deal with increasing interest rates compounding, we must constantly advocate to work with the American Dental Association to make sure the voice of dental students are heard and acted upon. As trustee our role is to speak for our students and serve as their representative on the national level. Finally, there is a growing dissatisfaction within the work force that must be addressed. We must work as a larger group to find and pinpoint how to leverage the multitude of factors that affect the work experience of dentists to create a stronger career outlook. This involves working with mid-level providers, current dentists entering, and those leaving the field as well. These hurdles to our careers must be addressed promptly to prevent future dissatisfaction