

Canidate Name: Shana Tadha

How do you work with or lead a team?

I lead a team by working alongside my colleagues and putting myself in their shoes. Rather than authoritarian leadership, I value a participative leadership style to foster open collaboration and unrestrained communication in every interaction. Leadership is about finding the balance between offering guidance and direction and allowing for individual freedom of creativity and decision-making in each member. Leadership is understanding the strengths of each team member and finding ways to accentuate them through mindful delegation. As Trustee, communication would be the primary method of promoting collaboration for me. By being available through multiple avenues (i.e. text, email, Zoom, and social media) and always being a listening ear, I hope to be approachable to all members of the D11 Cabinet and member body. From prior DEI and ASDA involvement, I believe that one of my strengths is fostering inclusivity by understanding and amplifying diverse perspectives. A foundational experience for me in ASDA was serving as D11 Chief of Staff, where I developed strengths in conflict management, organization, and responsibility through communicating with directors, chapter presidents, and other district officers. In the future, I aim to contribute to D11 Cabinet by applying these past experiences and advice from mentors who have served in D11 Cabinet before me. I hope to be a reliable Trustee who can fill the shoes of past Trustees and build upon previous work to further our district goal.

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

When I started dental school, I quickly saw how ASDA made such a tangible impact on the chapter, district, and national levels. This convinced me to make ASDA a strong priority. During my first year, I began participating at the chapter level, becoming a member of the Research, Diversity and Inclusion, Morale and Wellness, and Business Symposium committees. Through these experiences, I developed skills in teamwork, communication, outreach, and planning. While attending conferences, I saw the benefits of organized dentistry, the power of networking, and the reach of advocacy. Annual Session 2023 was a pivotal moment in pushing me to make a direct impact as D11 Chief of Staff. During D2, serving as Chief of Staff has opened my eyes to the inner workings of the district cabinet, including the organization needed for conferences and the support given for individual chapters. I aided in the process of cultivating a driven D11 cabinet, implementing the first District 11 Scholarship Fund, organizing a successful West Regional Conference, and so much more. Concurrently as UCLA's Legislative Liaison, I grew in policy and advocacy leadership, increasing participation in ASDA Action and organizing UCLA's first Debate Day through the ASDA Legislative Grant. My experiences at both the chapter and district levels this year have not only equipped me for this role but have also strengthened my passion for potentially dedicating my next year to District 11's endeavors as Trustee.

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

As Chief of Staff (COS), I have developed a special bond with district initiatives, and I would like to see them through and build upon them this year. Through the mentorship of past trustees, I have realized how impactful the Trustee role could be in this effort. First, I aim to strengthen the district cabinet. I have seen first-hand the difficulties directors face, and more support could be provided through a COS, who is dedicated solely to goal management. By adding a new secretary for communication, emails, and minutes, the COS can better organize directors' initiatives and meetings. Furthermore, by adding a

conference committee, directors can focus on district goals instead of conference planning. Second, I will focus on mitigating conference attendance cost. Through ramping up district-wide fundraising and holding the first-ever Predental Conference, I aim to bolster the Scholarship Fund we created this year, helping chapters to increase participation at conferences. Third, I will create frameworks for successful advocacy, wellness, advanced standing, and sustainability weeks and promote collaboration between chapter presidents to give each other feedback on these initiatives. I will also implement an Anonymous Suggestions Form, an avenue of direct communication between district members and the Trustee. I will begin a monthly newsletter to outline key initiatives for transparency to members. Finally, hitting the ground running at Annual Session rather than summer would give D11 a head start. I will begin transitions and establish goals and expectations as soon as March to make the most of this year.

What are 2-3 issues important to dental students?

As more dental students delve into advocacy in dentistry, issues like dental insurance reform and expanding Medicaid (through ASDA's Medicaid Dental Benefits Act) are becoming even more important. Thus, it is crucial to prioritize outreach initiatives among individual chapters through the District Legislative Liaison and Advanced Standing Directors. During my time as UCLA Legislative Liaison, I have seen an increase in participation as dental students become more aware of issues directly pertaining to their life after dental school, like dental student debt interest deferment through the REDI Act. Although most D1s do not come in knowing about these initiatives, upperclassmen in ASDA often realize the importance of sharing their knowledge to gain strength in numbers and push these goals. Moreover, I understand that mitigating costs is a paramount challenge for students. Not only are students anxious about debt post-graduation, but events such as conferences are becoming increasingly expensive to attend, creating a barrier to participation for several dental schools. Furthermore, dental students deal with systemic inequities and a lack of diversity while they are in school. I hope to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion as a Trustee through involving District DEI Chairs in chapter-level efforts and pushing for initiatives that highlight underserved ethnic groups. Through my role as Trustee, I will continue to keep in mind the issues important to other dental students and act as a representative of the seven chapters at national and ADA meetings.