

**Canidate Name:** Simona Loshi

**How do you work with or lead a team?**

Effective team leadership requires a combination of strong interpersonal skills, clear communication, and promoting a collaborative and inclusive environment. Establishing open lines of communication and ensuring team members feel heard and valued are crucial expectations for leading a team successfully. As the president of Temple ASDA this year and leader of the pre-dental ASDA chapter during my undergraduate years, I've come to appreciate collaborative efforts and welcome teammates' inputs and experiences, which have led us to create outstanding events. This year, we fundraised around \$30,000, fully funding students for conferences, resulting in Temple having the strongest representation in District 3 during NLC. As a leader, knowing each person's strengths allowed me to delegate responsibilities to the best-suited individuals. Last October, we took over the Patagonia sale after hearing about its high demand, confidently designating tasks to the president-elect and VP-elect. We sold 116 jackets with requests to hold it again next year. While delegating tasks, I ensure teammates know they can always reach out with concerns. By setting clear goals and expectations for each semester, we have successfully reached each initiative.

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

As the president of Temple ASDA and having led the pre-dental chapter during my undergraduate years, I've accumulated valuable experience that positions me well for the role of District Trustee. During my term as President, I have held several meetings to make sure the club was functioning properly. I would review finances with the executive board to determine money allocations as well as how many students we could bring to conferences. My role of overseeing 21 Committee Chairs and the Executive Board has allowed me to understand how to successfully lead an organization that will translate into my role as Trustee. My experience in leading a school chapter has equipped me to comprehend the challenges dental students face with the school administration. I've worked with the assistant dean and academic affairs, advocating for students' rights to attend conferences and preserving the chapter's autonomy in decision-making. By eliminating financial barriers to conference attendance, we enabled students to create connections with organized dentistry. Another highlight during my term was the new relationships I formed within the district. I worked alongside Penn ASDA and created the first Temple-Penn Dinner Boat where 400 students came together. Being president of the school chapter has allowed me to experience similar tasks as a District Trustee on a smaller scale. I am confident that my experiences will allow me to take on the role of Trustee and lead District 3 in the upcoming year.

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

Having served as chapter President, I'm eager to extend my involvement in ASDA at a national level during my final year of school. Organized dentistry has enriched my academic journey, creating new connections and deepening my understanding of legislation, advancements in dentistry, and leadership. Transitioning from chapter to district, I aim to uphold the high standards set by past Trustees and support every District 3 chapter in achieving their goals. Identifying barriers to student conference participation, like insufficient support and autonomy, I plan to collaborate with presidents and schools to find solutions and boost representation. Regarding the District 3 conference, my objective is to secure a location that accommodates all chapters and address the geographic isolation Pittsburgh experiences,

thereby enhancing their representation. Outside of conferences, I also aim to organize interactive events that help bring the chapters closer together. Additionally, I am committed to fostering diversity within the district board, ensuring equitable representation from all member schools. I plan to organize a Zoom session where former board members can offer valuable insight and advice to new applicants. My inspiration is a more representative leadership highlighting each chapter's strengths and by introducing a change in leadership I can showcase Temple's. By having a Trustee from Temple, I hope to inspire more students to pursue district and national positions. In summary, my goal as a prospective District Trustee is to cultivate a supportive environment and provide opportunities for growth. I aim to contribute to the ongoing success and expansion of District 3.

### **What are 2-3 issues important to dental students?**

A significant concern for dental students is the burden of student loans. This burden, compounded by the lack of stipends in many specialties, often leads to prioritizing loan repayment over career aspirations. Non-U.S. citizen students face heightened challenges, encountering barriers to student loans and scholarships, leading to financial strain and impacting mental health. Lobbying Congress to support the REDI act can help eliminate some of these barriers students face. Another prevalent issue that students face is academic and clinical stress in school. Every year, D1 students walk through the doors and begin their dental education, asking upperclassmen about their experiences and advice. The collective response is how drained and burned out students were by the middle of their second year. Adding financial strain to academic stress can take a toll on a student's mental health, which should be addressed. Burnout can result in a student's academic success declining and their passion in dentistry decreasing, with many students questioning if they chose the right career path. Addressing these issues is imperative. Initiatives should include stipends for specialized residencies, lower student loan interest rates, and removing financial barriers for non-resident students. Additionally, there should be increased access to mental health resources, discounts for wellness activities like gyms, and changes within the school to assist struggling students. These changes aim to create a more supportive environment, allowing dental students to pursue their passions without compromising their financial or mental well-being.