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How do you work with or lead a team?

My academic and professional journey has consistently centered around collaboration, leadership, and learning from diverse teams. During my research experiences at the University of Michigan and the University of California, San Francisco, I worked with interdisciplinary teams of up to ten members. As primary author on several projects, I helped guide teams through data collection, analysis, and manuscript development. These experiences taught me how to navigate differing perspectives respectfully, integrate individual strengths, and keep projects moving toward shared goals.

At Tufts University's International Dental Program, my leadership abilities have grown even further. As an active ASDA member and International Program Class President, I collaborate closely with peers, faculty, and administrators to support academic initiatives and advocate for student needs. My involvement in local and state dental associations has strengthened my ability to balance responsibilities, maintain professionalism, and build trust across teams.

I prioritize open communication, psychological safety, and mutual respect. I make an intentional effort to connect individually with team members, especially those who may hesitate to speak up ensuring every voice is acknowledged. When disagreements arise, I step in as a moderator to bridge perspectives, clarify goals, and support constructive dialogue.

Across clinical, research, and organizational environments, I have learned that effective teamwork is rooted in transparency, shared accountability, and a commitment to collective success. These experiences continue to shape me as both a thoughtful leader and a dependable team member.

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

My leadership experiences have equipped me with the vision, resilience, and collaborative skills necessary to serve as ASDA President or Vice President. As International Program Class President at Tufts University, I have led a diverse group of students, advocated for their academic and professional needs, and fostered an inclusive environment where every student feels represented. This role has strengthened my ability to make balanced decisions, manage competing priorities, and lead with empathy and accountability.

My involvement with ASDA at the local, district, and national levels has deepened my understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing dental students across programs and regions. Participating in national conferences, policy discussions, leadership programming has given me insight into the broader landscape of dental education, public health, and organized

dentistry. I have learned how national leadership can influence advocacy efforts, student wellness, and professional development.

Leading research and clinical teams has further sharpened my ability to coordinate complex projects, integrate diverse perspectives, mentor peers. I understand that leadership requires not only directing initiatives but also listening actively, fostering collaboration, and creating opportunities for others to grow.

I envision a connected, empowered, and forward-thinking ASDA community. By prioritizing innovation, inclusivity, advocacy, and student well-being, I am prepared to serve as a national leader who amplifies student voices and strengthens ASDA's impact across the country.

Conversations with President Payal Patel and Vice President Tyler Jenness at NLC provided candid insight into the dedication, challenges, and rewarding opportunities within national leadership, further inspiring me to pursue this role.

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

Below are three issues that strongly impact dental students today and are central to effective national leadership:

1. Mental Health, Wellness, and Burnout Prevention

Dental students face significant academic, financial, and emotional pressures. Prioritizing mental health through national programming such as resilience training, peer support networks, and stress-management resources is essential. A healthier student body strengthens academic performance, clinical confidence, and long-term professional success.

2. Licensure Reform & Advocacy for Fair Pathways

Students need clear, equitable, and modernized licensure pathways. Continued advocacy for patient-centered, evidence-based licensure exams and portability of licensure across states remains essential. Strengthening students' voices in legislative discussions ensures the next generation of dentists enters the profession with fairness and clarity.

3. Future-Ready Dentistry: AI, Digital Tools, and Innovation

Rapid advances in AI, digital workflows, and tele dentistry require students to be prepared for a changing clinical landscape. National ASDA leadership must prioritize education that equips students to use emerging technologies ethically, effectively, and confidently. Preparing students for future practice models ensures long-term career resilience.