

Raven King, Virginia '27

How do you work with or lead a team?

My approach to leadership starts with listening more than I speak. As a leader, it's easy to want to give your own direction. Although this has good intentions, it can inadvertently overshadow other voices and lead to micromanagement. Real progress only happens when everyone on the team has space to share their ideas and perspectives. I see a leader as someone who is a true team player and helps to create an environment where others feel comfortable in openly sharing their opinions, even if it might go against the group's.

I also believe leadership is rooted in trust. When team members trust one another, honest conversations can happen without fear of conflict. Differing opinions become opportunities for growth and understanding, rather than sources of tension. The ASDA President and Vice President roles are unique because they rely so heavily on teamwork. None of the positions can be successful alone, as they require constant communication and collaboration. I believe that all three of these roles are equally important in supporting and guiding the organization forward.

Leadership isn't just about the work we do now, but ensuring we pave the way for our future leaders. As dental students, our time in school is brief, and it's important we continue to help build this organization up so that it can continue to thrive, even after we're gone.

I believe that all of these qualities are what make a strong leader and remain the foundation of how I lead today as a Trustee.

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

I've held leadership roles in ASDA at every level, including pre-dental, local, district, and national.

Before starting dental school, I served on both the District 1 and District 4 Pre-dental Boards. At Virginia Commonwealth University, I was my class's ASDA Representative during my D1 and D2 years, and I now serve as the Legislative Liaison for VCU ASDA. Within this role, I've helped organize a school-wide voter registration drive and hosted legislative lunch and learns. In January, I will assist in coordinating the VDA's Dental Days at the Capitol, where students will advocate for issues affecting Virginian dentists and dental students. I also represent VCU on the VDA Board of Directors as a student delegate.

At the district level, I've served on the District 4 Cabinet every year of dental school and now hold the position of District 4 Trustee. As Trustee, I serve on the Governance Committee where I review ASDA's governance documents and organizational structure. I was also appointed as

ASDA's student consultant to the ADA Council on Dental Education and Licensure (CDEL) for the 2025–2026 term.

Each of my leadership roles, whether big or small, has prepared me to run for the position of President or Vice President. Understanding ASDA from multiple perspectives is essential for these positions, and I believe that I have developed that insight through years of involvement and leadership. I'm fully committed to this organization, and applying for an Executive Committee position feels like the next meaningful step in my ASDA leadership journey.

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

The dental profession looks very different today than it did even 10–15 years ago. Standards of care are rising with technology constantly evolving, and patients are becoming more informed as oral health content spreads online. With the field advancing so rapidly, many dental schools struggle to keep their curricula current. As a result, more students each year graduate feeling they need additional training through a 1-year post-graduate residency or expensive continuing education to stay competitive. This is especially concerning as tuition continues to rise with no signs of slowing.

At the same time, misinformation about dental care is spreading across social media. Whether it's skepticism about fluoride, distrust of root canals, or other misconceptions, this constant discourse can mislead the public and challenge our profession, which further weakens patient trust. Dental students must be prepared to have those difficult conversations and effectively address these misconceptions head-on to ensure patients are well-informed when making decisions on their oral health and protect the integrity of our profession.

Fortunately, ASDA's membership remains strong and continues to grow as new dental schools open and more programs adopt automatic enrollment. However, representation among newly graduated dentists in organized dentistry continues to decline. Since one of the core purposes in ASDA's mission statement is to "inspire lifelong involvement in organized dentistry", it's essential that we maintain this momentum beyond graduation. I hope we can continue strengthening that bridge so new dentists feel supported and motivated to continue to advocate for the profession for years to come.