

**Christine Jiang, LECOM '29****How do you work with or lead a team?**

When working with or leading a team, I believe success begins with personal preparation, active listening, clear communication, and consistent follow-through. These skills are especially important in a District Trustee role, where representing students accurately and responsibly depends on trust and communication.

I prioritize doing the necessary research and preparation before engaging in discussions, particularly when decisions may impact a broad group of students. As a trustee, this means understanding the concerns, policies, and priorities affecting members within the district so I can represent them thoughtfully. I value gathering diverse perspectives and setting clear expectations while remaining open to feedback, as effective advocacy requires listening as much as speaking.

I also believe leadership requires adaptability. By reading the environment, understanding team dynamics, and recognizing institutional constraints, I aim to help align stakeholders toward shared goals. When people understand the broader context and feel heard, collaboration becomes more productive and solutions more sustainable.

Finally, I place strong emphasis on follow-through. In a District Trustee role, communication without action is incomplete. I am committed to maintaining feedback loops, providing updates, and ensuring that concerns raised by peers and students are addressed with accountability and intention. For me, leadership means not only representing others, but ensuring their voices lead to meaningful outcomes.

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

My leadership experiences have equipped me to serve as a District Trustee by strengthening my ability to represent others, build relationships across diverse groups, and follow through with accountability.

After only one semester at LECOM SDM, I was selected to serve as a Student Ambassador, reflecting early trust in my professionalism and communication skills. In this role, I assist with interviews, campus tours, and outreach for a young and developing institution, serving as a liaison between prospective students, current students, and administration. This experience mirrors the District Trustee's responsibility to communicate national initiatives, relay student concerns, and support chapters across a district.

Throughout my academic journey, I have worked in collaborative, high-accountability environments. At age 16, I conducted research with the Texas A&M University Department of Marine Sciences and was later published as a coauthor at age 19, reinforcing the importance of

integrity and long-term follow-through. I also interned with NASA through Team-118-Robonauts and competed as a World Championship quarterfinalist, gaining experience in systems-based teamwork and cross-functional leadership.

Complementing these experiences, I served as Service Chair Officer for a spirit and sorority organization and as an officer for the Chinese Student Association at the University of Texas at Austin, strengthening my ability to engage diverse communities and lead through service and inclusion.

I continue to maintain strong professional networks through UT Austin and beyond, including peers working in engineering and technology sectors at Tesla, Samsung, and Google. Together, these experiences prepare me to connect people, support governance, and contribute meaningfully.

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

I am interested in the District Trustee role because it allows me to contribute financial fluency, accurate representation, and actionable advocacy to organized dentistry. I grew up in a single-parent household of four with a household income of approximately \$16,000 per year, which required early awareness of budgeting, tradeoffs, and the real consequences of financial decisions.

Before dental school, I worked as a dental billing specialist and in insurance-related roles, which gave me firsthand insight into how reimbursement structures, coverage limitations, and administrative procedures impact both patients and providers. Understanding how billing functions showed me how financial systems influence access to care, clinical decision-making, and practice sustainability.

That perspective has become even more relevant as a dental student navigating tuition, loans, budgeting, and financial planning independently. Managing these responsibilities without parental guidance has deepened my understanding of the financial pressures dental students face and the importance of transparency, communication, and responsible financial oversight within organized dentistry.

As a District Trustee, the contribution I hope to make is accurate representation, putting in the necessary work, and following through. I am especially interested in translating ideas into action—ensuring that student concerns, strategic initiatives, and available resources lead to tangible outcomes rather than remaining theoretical.

I value listening carefully to students, understanding differences across institutions, and helping move initiatives from discussion to execution so students feel informed, supported, and empowered.

Through this role, I hope to serve as a reliable liaison who connects students, leadership, and resources to create meaningful, measurable impact.

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

One of the most significant issues facing dental students is financial stress. Rising tuition, increasing student loan debt, and cost-of-living pressures require students to make complex financial decisions—often without formal training or guidance. Gaps in financial literacy can affect academic focus, mental well-being, and long-term career choices—especially post-graduation. ASDA is uniquely positioned to bridge this gap by accurately reflecting student needs and translating them into advocacy, education, and accessible financial resources. When student concerns are clearly communicated, ASDA can help expand financial literacy initiatives and promote transparency around debt, compensation, and career planning.

A second major concern is career stability and outlook, particularly as dentistry continues to evolve. Rapid advances in technology—such as digital workflows, CAD/CAM, AI-assisted diagnostics, advanced technologies/techniques like LANAP—are reshaping how dentistry is practiced and how graduates enter the workforce. Changes in practice models, corporate dentistry, and reimbursement structures add uncertainty. ASDA plays an important role in providing students with up-to-date information, leadership development, and exposure to organized dentistry to support informed decision-making during and after dental school.

Finally, work-life balance and lifestyle are increasingly important to dental students as awareness of burnout and mental health grows. ASDA helps amplify student voices and share resources that promote sustainable, fulfilling career paths.

By prioritizing accurate representation and follow-through, ASDA can turn student concerns into meaningful opportunities that support both students and the future of the profession.