

**Katie Hayden, Louisville '28**

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

Your team matches the standard you set, so I believe it's essential to lead in a way that empowers others to reach their full potential. Effective leadership begins with building a strong, inclusive culture – one where team members share the same foundational information, feel comfortable voicing ideas, and are motivated to take action toward shared goals. If your team is aligned, disciplined and committed, the positive results will follow.

I prioritize clear communication and organization so expectations are understood and individuals feel confident in their roles. I value collaboration and intentionally create space for diverse perspectives, encouraging ownership of ideas and shared accountability. When people feel heard and supported, they are more invested in both the process and the outcome. The team's goals should guide every decision we make, and every role is vital to our success.

In a role such as District Trustee, which has a one-year term, the leader is only as strong as the team behind them. Collaboration is essential to achieving meaningful progress. At the same time, the trustee also has a responsibility to uphold the organization as a whole by acting with integrity, professionalism, and alignment with its mission and values.

I approach leadership with the mindset that my role is to support, coordinate, and elevate those around me. By setting a high standard, following through consistently, and fostering collaboration, I work to ensure teams function effectively and create lasting impact.

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

Reflecting on my education, I can hardly think of a time when I was not involved in student government. Advocacy is the road that turns intention into impact, and vision without logistics remains only a dream. These principles have guided my leadership and prepared me to represent District 6 with vision and execution.

At the University of Louisville, I served as Student Body President, representing the voices, concerns, and ideas of the entire student body. I worked closely with campus departments and community partners to advocate for student needs and translate feedback into actionable discussions with university leadership. I also served on UofL's Board of Trustees, gaining firsthand experience in governance, policy discussion, and strategic decision-making.

My involvement with ASDA began during my time as President and has continued throughout dental school. From working on LASDA initiatives to serving as D1 Class Representative and later as Cardinal Initiative Director, I have intentionally learned the structure, priorities, and impact of ASDA. I further expanded this understanding through my role as Director of Cabinet

Development on the District 6 Executive Cabinet, where I gained insight into how district-level leadership supports chapter success and national initiatives.

Additionally, I have experience planning and executing large-scale fundraising events, gaining extensive experience in logistics, marketing, stakeholder engagement and participant engagement, all of which strengthened my ability to execute complex initiatives while keeping teams informed and motivated.

Through these experiences, I have developed the skills, perspective, and commitment necessary to effectively serve as a District Trustee.

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

I attended my first ASDA conference with District 7 in October of 2024 and left feeling inspired, motivated, and eager to become more involved in ASDA – to play a role in the change the organization creates.

District Trustees are tasked with providing strategic oversight, mentoring other leaders, and supporting the foundation of ASDA and its members, both present and future, while upholding the organization as a whole. The balance between advocacy and stewardship is what draws me to the role. I understand that trusteeship requires making decisions that serve the long-term health of the organization, even when those decisions may not align with individual or short-term interests. I value leadership that empowers others, prioritizes transparency, and considers the broader impact of every decision. Strong leadership builds culture by creating environments others want to be part of – where individuals are trusted, supported, and given space to grow.

After experiencing redistricting as well as the opening of a new dental school this year, I am motivated to help continue building District 6's identity. To me, culture is defined not just by what is accomplished, but by how work is done. Intentional mentorship, leadership development, member engagement, and clear communication grounded in shared values are hallmarks of strong culture.

I am particularly excited about ASDA's new Council on Wellness and the opportunity to amplify its work by supporting mentorship and chapter-level engagement in sustainable wellness initiatives as well as helping build a district culture that is connected, inspired, and driven.

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

Connection is essential to the dental school experience. From relationships with peers and faculty to mentorship from upperclassmen, alumni, and other dental professionals, feeling connected fosters belonging in an otherwise demanding environment. Strong connections

foster collaboration, reduce isolation, and help students navigate academic and personal challenges throughout school.

Healthy lifestyles, both physical and mental, are equally important. This is why ASDA's Council on Wellness is absolutely essential. From addressing food insecurity to expanding access to mental health resources, students need environments where they feel heard and supported. Wellness must be recognized as foundational to success, not secondary to productivity, for students to thrive both personally and professionally.

Perfection, or pursuit of perfection, is a defining yet often unspoken issue in dental education. Dentistry demands precision; we operate within millimeters. However, the pressure to perform flawlessly can foster fear of failure rather than growth. High-stake evaluations and constant comparison can lead to self-doubt and imposter syndrome, especially apparent as students approach graduation. I have seen this through a close friend who is a D4. She's clinically capable and hardworking, yet fearful of practicing independently, not due to lack of preparation, but from the belief that she must be perfect from day one. Normalizing growth, mentorship, and learning beyond graduation is essential to helping students transition confidently into practice.

Addressing connection, wellness, and the culture of perfectionism is essential not only for supporting dental students, but for shaping resilient, ethical clinicians who are prepared to care for both their patients and themselves.