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How do you work with or lead a team?

When building a team, leadership requires more than a set of common goals, but also one who values diverse insights and perspectives that others may not recognize. I have learned that leadership often requires stepping up to take on additional responsibilities to support others and that members feel engaged and prepared to face challenges together.

I have developed a strong foundation in delegating tasks and holding check-in meetings to receive updates or provide guidance when needed. I also prioritize empathy and remind my team that if one feels school to be overwhelming, it is okay to take a step back and let others take action to keep our team united as one. Building meaningful connections with my peers to better understand their needs, as I am committed to creating an environment for others to let their ideas flourish. Feedback is one of the most important values I hold as a leader; listening to concerns motivates me to continuously improve and provide better resources for those we serve.

As chapter President, I found it valuable to bring committee chairs together to discuss concerns openly and collaborate on action plans that address challenges and strengthen our chapter. I have also enjoyed witnessing members of my team express their excitement for events or projects that they are passionate about. Ultimately, my goal as a leader is to foster a supportive, inclusive team that works collaboratively to create lasting and meaningful impact.

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

My philosophy has been that every barrier comes with a chance to learn and grow for the better. Whether it is having the desire to grow as an individual or being the leader that inspires others, it is something I strive to pass on to others.

Mentoring for the Midwestern Health Careers Institute Program gave me the opportunity to guide high school students as they explored different careers in medicine. During this program, I started to develop deep connections with these students by listening to their personal stories and passions that motivate them to enter the field of medicine. It filled my heart to hear that these students look up to us for guidance.

Serving as the District 11 Vendor Relations Chair, I have firsthand experience with the coordination and execution of the Southwest Regional conference that brought together over 300 students from 10 different schools. This role has allowed me to work closely with sponsors to promote member engagement and new learning opportunities.

Being the student liaison for the Arizona Dental Association Council on New Dentists and Membership allowed me to represent dental students across Arizona and learn the analytics of

member engagement, and organize dentistry. As a voice for those I represented, the concerns I brought forth were both valid and impactful.

These experiences have shaped me into the leader who advocates for the needs of others, but most importantly, someone who encourages others to step up into new roles and creates spaces for people to be seen.

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

Everyone enters dental school with different motivations and has their own unique path. When I was uncertain about my own path, a turning point came when I attended the Western Regional Conference, where I was introduced to students from other schools and connected with current ASDA leaders. Through these experiences, I realized that ASDA had become the support system I needed. The friendships that I have built through ASDA are invaluable. Being that I can rely on my ASDA family during challenging times-or having conferences to look forward to-has helped sustain my motivation to stay involved.

Beyond fostering community, ASDA has also given me valuable insight into the future of our profession. Experiences such as Annual Session and National Lobby Day showed me how our voices truly matter in advocating for dentistry. These opportunities inspired me to give back and give these experiences to others.

As a District Trustee, one of my top priorities would be strengthening the sense of community among the schools in District 11. Hosting webinars to welcome incoming students or expanding networking and mentorship opportunities can create stronger connections throughout the district. I also aim to support chapters by providing resources and sharing information about the many opportunities ASDA has to offer. Lastly, I would like to be the voice that channels the concerns of schools facing hardships and work alongside them to develop solutions that support their unique needs, and help others discover their own place within ASDA—just as others have done for me.

What are 2-3 issues important to dental students?

Financial burdens and student debt are major concerns for students. With the change in access to financial support and the cost of tuition increasing is a barrier that many incoming students are having to face. As a leader in ASDA, I plan to be a continuous advocate for our students and encourage students to do their part in reaching out to legislators to help bridge the connection between student concerns and policy changes.

Physical health and wellness often become hidden by the demanding nature of dental school. As dental students, it's not only important that we remain focused on our academics and

patient care, but also on ourselves is equally essential. Providing resources such as workout plans, health recipes, and words of affirmation can help students during busy times. Hosting activity challenges or webinars focused on health and wellness to hopefully encourage students to take care of themselves, so we can better serve patients.

Clinical readiness tends to be a concern for many, depending on their clinical training while in school. Although dental schools all hold similar curricula, students can often feel the need for more guidance before entering into workforce. On the other hand, some may lack the understanding of insurance and what they may need to protect themselves in practice, which can be daunting to deal with. I would aim to provide webinars or breakout sessions during conferences that cover these areas to help build a foundation for students before entering the workforce.