

MarKee Weaver, Boston '27**How do you work with or lead a team?**

I am a leader who focuses on uplifting those around me and helping individuals reach their fullest potential. I view leadership as a catalyst for growth—creating the structure, support, and clarity that allow others to succeed rather than leading for recognition. I lead with empathy, accessibility, and intention, ensuring people feel supported while also being challenged to grow.

Central to my leadership style is a willingness to push the edges and question systems that exist simply because they have always been in place. I believe progress requires reflection and courage, and that effectiveness should be continuously evaluated. I encourage open dialogue, critical thinking, and innovation, creating space for others to ask questions, challenge assumptions, and advocate for meaningful change.

As a Black male dental student, I am especially intentional about mentorship and inclusion. I understand how overwhelming leadership and professional spaces can be for individuals from underrepresented backgrounds, which shapes my commitment to being approachable, consistent, and supportive.

I also prioritize organization, transparent communication, and accountability. Strong systems and clear expectations allow teams to function efficiently and focus on impact rather than confusion. As an ASDA District 1 Trustee, I would lead by empowering student leaders across the district, ensuring diverse voices are heard, and supporting sustainable initiatives that move our organization forward while remaining responsive to the evolving needs of students.

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

My leadership experiences have prepared me for the District Trustee role by consistently placing me in positions where I advocate for students, build community, and think beyond my own school. As ASDA District 1 Chief of Events, I work across multiple dental schools to plan and execute district-wide programming. This role has pushed me to consider the diverse needs of students throughout the region, manage large-scale logistics, and collaborate with leaders from different institutions to deliver meaningful, well-organized experiences.

As President of my school's SNDA chapter, I lead a dynamic executive board and oversee programming that spans mentorship, community service, academic support, and wellness. This experience has taught me how to balance big-picture vision with day-to-day execution while staying accountable to the students we serve. Expanding programming and strengthening engagement required clear communication, strong organization, and the ability to adapt when things did not go as planned.

My work as a Matriculation and Admissions Ambassador has further shaped my leadership by grounding it in service and support. Helping students navigate key transition points reinforced the importance of advocacy, inclusion, and approachability.

Together, these roles have equipped me with the perspective, organization, and commitment needed to serve as a District Trustee who listens, collaborates, and actively works to strengthen ASDA for students across District 1.

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 serve dental students on a broader scale while leading from a place of empathy, lived experience, and advocacy. As a Black man from the rural South, my path to dentistry has been shaped by financial, geographic, and systemic barriers—many of which still exist today. Those experiences motivate me to lead in a way that actively works to remove barriers for those who come after me and ensures that student voices across District 1 are heard and valued.

In this position, I hope to advance affordability, access, and student sustainability within ASDA. Rising tuition, decreasing loan availability, and the increasing cost of living—housing, food security, and participation in professional development opportunities—place growing pressure on dental students and disproportionately impact those from marginalized backgrounds. As District Trustee, I plan to advocate for transparent communication, creative funding avenues, sponsorships, and accessible virtual or hybrid programming so all students can fully engage in leadership and professional growth.

I also hope to strengthen equity, wellbeing, and belonging across District 1. In the current political and social climate, it is critical to foster inclusive spaces where students feel safe to be their authentic selves. By centering empathy, community, and dialogue, I aim to help build a district that supports student growth, strengthens leadership pipelines, and moves organized dentistry toward a more inclusive and equitable future.

What are 2-3 issues important to dental students?

First, the rising cost of dental education is a critical concern. Tuition continues to increase with no clear end in sight, while available funding and loan support have become more limited. This creates a harmful “pay-to-play” pipeline, where access to the profession is increasingly restricted to those with significant financial resources, ultimately threatening workforce diversity and access to care in underserved communities.

Second, the persistent separation of oral health from overall healthcare significantly hinders dentists’ ability to provide comprehensive care. When oral health is treated as secondary,

patient education suffers, leading to widespread misinformation, delayed treatment, and poor health outcomes. This disconnect limits opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and prevents dentists from fully addressing the role oral health plays in systemic disease, reducing both the effectiveness and reach of patient care.

Third, student wellness and equity are growing concerns, particularly due to an uneven playing field across dental schools. Differences in grading systems—such as pass/fail versus ranked or letter-graded curricula—create disparities in how students are evaluated for residencies and professional opportunities. Combined with academic intensity, financial stress, and clinical demands, these inconsistencies contribute to burnout and anxiety, raising serious concerns about fairness and long-term sustainability within dental education.