

## **Nadia Yahyapour, Utah '28**

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

I believe that working with a collaborative and organized team is essential. When leading, I take a supportive and structured approach, aiming to create an environment where every team member feels valued, informed, and empowered to contribute. I start by clearly defining expectations, timelines, and roles so everyone understands the shared goal and their part in achieving it.

Transparency and open communication are central to my leadership. I encourage team members to share ideas, concerns, and feedback early so we can problem-solve together. I prioritize consistent check-ins and progress updates, not to micromanage, but to keep everyone aligned and supported. When challenges arise, I focus on solutions rather than blame and step in where needed to keep the group moving forward. I also recognize each person's strengths and delegate tasks in ways that allow people to grow and shine.

Above all, I lead with empathy. Dental school is demanding, and successful teamwork requires understanding each other's pressures and helping one another through them. My leadership roles as ADEA Utah Chapter President, ASDA District 11 leader, Sports Dentistry Club coordinator, and former Class President have reinforced that the best teams thrive when communication is respectful, goals are shared, and everyone feels supported. This is the approach I bring to every team: clear communication, organization, accountability, and genuine care for the people I'm working with.

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

My leadership experiences, spanning dental school and national organizations, have prepared me to serve effectively as District Trustee for District 11. I currently serve as the ADEA President of the Utah Chapter, where I lead our team in creating engaging and impactful events, coordinate professional development programming, and represent student perspectives at regional and national levels. This role has strengthened my communication skills, strategic planning abilities, and my ability to advocate on behalf of my peers.

Within ASDA, I serve as District 11 Social Media Chair, collaborating across chapters to deliver consistent messaging, increase engagement, and amplify student involvement. Through this position, I have learned how to unify diverse voices and create content that communicates clearly, professionally, and with impact.

At the University of Utah School of Dentistry, I am the Community Outreach Coordinator for the Sports Dentistry Club, organizing service events and connecting students with unique clinical and educational opportunities. Additionally, I have experience in class leadership: I served as

Class President during D1 year and currently serve as Class Social Lead for D2 year, where I help strengthen class cohesion and facilitate communication between classmates and administration. Together, these roles have taught me how to lead with empathy, delegate effectively, collaborate across teams, and advocate for meaningful change. These are skills I would bring to the role of District Trustee.

**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 provides the opportunity to advocate for dental students at a broader level while strengthening communication between chapters, district leadership, and national organizations. I am motivated by the ability to ensure student voices are not only heard, but meaningfully represented and acted upon.

I believe effective leadership comes from clear communication, transparency, and empowering others to contribute. I prioritize setting clear expectations, maintaining consistent communication, and creating an environment where ideas and concerns can be shared openly. This approach has been essential in my leadership roles as ADEA Utah Chapter President, ASDA District 11 leader, and class leadership positions, where I have worked across teams and institutions to advocate for student needs.

These experiences have prepared me to serve as a District Trustee by teaching me how to unify diverse perspectives, communicate professionally across organizations, and advocate with empathy and accountability. I have learned how to balance student concerns with institutional realities while pushing for meaningful improvements.

As a District Trustee, I aim to foster collaboration across chapters, promote student wellness and financial transparency, and enhance access to professional development and leadership opportunities. Dental school presents significant academic, emotional, and financial challenges, and I believe strong district-level leadership can play a key role in addressing these issues. Ultimately, I am pursuing this role because I care deeply about student advocacy and am committed to creating a more supportive, transparent, and connected experience for dental students across the district.

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

As a dental student, I see three major issues that consistently impact our experience: wellness, financial strain, and meaningful student representation. Dental school demands long hours, emotional resilience, and constant performance, and without the right support, it's easy for students to feel overwhelmed. Prioritizing wellness by setting realistic expectations, reducing unnecessary redundancies, and improving access to mental health resources is essential for helping us stay balanced and succeed.

Financial pressure is another challenge that affects nearly every student I know. Rising tuition, clinical costs, and licensing fees create significant stress, and many students feel unprepared to navigate long-term debt. Increasing transparency around expenses and expanding financial literacy programming would make a meaningful difference. Better access to scholarships and funding opportunities would also ease the burden and allow students to focus more on learning than on financial worry.

I also believe students deserve to be included in decisions that shape our education. Whether it's curriculum changes, clinic scheduling, grading policies, or institutional updates, our voices matter. Strengthening communication between student leaders and administration ensures decisions reflect real student experiences rather than assumptions.

By focusing on wellness, financial clarity, and student involvement, I believe we can create a dental school environment that is more supportive, transparent, and empowering for everyone. These priorities shape not only our daily experience but also our long-term success and confidence as future clinicians.