

Sharen Abi Nader, Los Angeles '27**How do you work with or lead a team?**

As Chapter President, I lead my team through a collaborative and supportive approach that balances clear delegation with active involvement. While I assign responsibilities based on individual strengths and roles, I do not view leadership as simply distributing tasks. I work closely with each board member, offering guidance, encouragement, and hands-on support to ensure they feel confident and supported in their responsibilities. I prioritize creating an environment where team members feel valued, heard, and comfortable asking for help, recognizing that strong outcomes are achieved through collective effort.

Beyond delegation, I emphasize structure and accountability by establishing clear goals, timelines, and expectations at the outset of each initiative. I maintain consistent communication through regular check-ins and transparent updates, allowing teams to stay aligned while adapting to challenges as they arise. When obstacles occur, I address them proactively and professionally, focusing on collaboration and solutions rather than assigning blame.

Mentorship is a central component of my leadership style, shaped by my own growth within ASDA since my D1 year. I am intentional about supporting emerging leaders by providing constructive feedback and opportunities for professional development. I adjust my leadership approach based on individual needs, offering hands-on guidance when necessary and autonomy once systems and trust are established.

This leadership approach has allowed me to build effective, motivated teams while maintaining continuity and professionalism. It also reflects my readiness for the District Trustee role, where supporting district officers, providing guidance, and fostering sustainable leadership are essential to the district's long-term success.

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

My leadership experiences within ASDA have been shaped by sustained involvement and progressive responsibility, beginning in my D1 year. I first served as a D1 Representative, where I learned the importance of advocacy, communication, and representing student voices at the chapter level. My position as D1 representative inspired me to later serve as Chapter Secretary, a role that strengthened my understanding of organizational operations, internal communication, and continuity between leadership teams. These early roles allowed me to develop a foundational understanding of ASDA's structure while building trust with peers and chapter leadership.

As I progressed into the role of Chapter President, my leadership focus expanded to governance, mentorship, and long-term planning. I oversaw chapter programming, budgeting,

and board development while ensuring alignment with district and national priorities. In parallel, I have served as President of multiple cultural student organizations, where I worked to promote diversity, inclusivity, and equitable access to leadership opportunities. These experiences reinforced my commitment to inclusive leadership and strengthened my ability to advocate for underrepresented voices within organized dentistry.

Serving as ASDA D13 Director of Events placed me in one of the most operationally demanding district roles, requiring oversight of large-scale programming, budget management, sponsor coordination, and collaboration across multiple schools. Working closely with district leadership and our Trustee in an inaugural district further emphasized the importance of mentorship, and guidance. Collectively, these experiences have equipped me to support district officers thoughtfully, strengthen district infrastructure, and contribute meaningfully to District 13's continued growth as a District Trustee.

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

My interest in the District Trustee role comes from my sustained involvement in ASDA since my D1 year and my direct investment in building D13 during its formative years. As our district continues to establish itself, I have worked closely alongside our current Trustee to understand what it takes to build durable systems, maintain continuity, and support district leadership beyond individual terms. This exposure has allowed me to contribute meaningfully to the district's foundation while gaining insight into the trustee role in practice.

While serving as ASDA D13 Director of Events, I helped develop structured timelines, sponsorship tracking systems, and planning frameworks that could be carried forward by future officers. Rather than operating year to year, I approached this role with sustainability in mind, an approach aligned with the responsibilities of a Trustee in a developing district. Similarly, as Chapter President, I regularly acted as a bridge between chapter boards and district leadership, translating district expectations into actionable plans and ensuring student feedback informed district decisions.

I have also prioritized mentorship and leadership transitions by documenting processes and lessons learned to support incoming leaders. As a Trustee, I would formalize these efforts to ensure District 13 continues to grow with clarity and stability.

Serving as Trustee during my fourth year would be a meaningful full-circle moment, allowing me to support the district at a strategic level after holding two of its most operationally critical leadership roles, and to give back to the organization that shaped my growth as a leader.

What are 2-3 issues important to dental students?

One significant issue facing dental students is the increasing financial burden of dental education. Rising tuition, cost of living, and licensure-related expenses place considerable stress on students and often influence career planning. As a District Trustee, I would support efforts to expand financial literacy programming at the district level by encouraging workshops, speaker sessions, and shared resources focused on loan management, budgeting, and long-term financial planning. Ensuring students have access to accurate and practical information is essential to reducing financial anxiety and supporting informed decision-making.

A second critical issue is student wellness and burnout. The academic and clinical demands of dental school can challenge students' mental and physical well-being, particularly during transitional periods such as entering clinic or preparing for licensure exams. Drawing from my leadership experience, I would advocate for district-wide wellness initiatives and mentorship opportunities that normalize conversations around mental health and provide students with peer and leadership support. Trustees play an important role in reinforcing a culture where student well-being is prioritized alongside academic excellence.

A third important issue is equitable access to leadership opportunities and professional development. Variability in institutional resources can impact student engagement and representation across schools. As a Trustee, I would work to promote inclusive district programming, transparent communication, and intentional outreach to ensure all chapters, regardless of size or resources, feel supported and represented. Addressing these issues requires thoughtful leadership, advocacy, and continuity, values I have consistently prioritized throughout my involvement with ASDA and would continue to uphold as a District Trustee.