

Will Alexander, Creighton '28**How do you work with or lead a team?**

I approach working in a team, as a leader and a team member with an emphasis on communication, collaboration, and accountability. Through leadership, I have found that it is important to align the team towards the goal and have an effective plan towards achieving it. Allowing team members to share their perspectives and formulating a plan around the strengths of the members helps the team move forward efficiently. Furthermore, I value open communication and organization so that each member feels emboldened to perform their best for their team members who are doing the same. When the team runs into conflict or underperformance, I focus on solutions instead of blame. Mistakes are one of the most effective ways to learn when approached constructively. I feel that the freedom to make mistakes encourages people to be adventurous and not feel limited in their roles.

In a team setting, I focus on collaboration and serving the role that I am in with care and attention. I realize that others are dependent on my work. Knowing that the goal and the team is bigger than myself helps me to focus on the task at hand in a way that brings me joy and passion. This has been central to my contributions on the executive team of District 8 and 9 the past two years and will be in the future.

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

I have gained leadership experience at both the local and district level through service on the executive teams of District 8 and 9, as well as through my role as the Vice-President of Creighton's local chapter of the Student National Dental Association (SNDA). In addition, my classmates selected me to represent their opinions to Creighton's Alumni board, where I served as a liaison to communicate judgement-free, anonymous feedback to the administration. This taught me to listen effectively to various opinions, organize them and deliver them cohesively. All skills that are core to the role as District Trustee.

My time with both District 8 and 9 has given me the opportunity to work with a diverse group of people across multiple schools while contributing to different initiatives. I was able to develop both an appreciation for other ways of thinking, problem solving and leadership. This helped me to also develop my own voice as a leader and team member.

As SNDA Vice President, I obtained experience planning and running events for our chapter. These included academic enrichment initiatives for D1 students and outreach events for prospective dental students at the undergraduate level. These events required organization, communication and collaboration across a large team with a lot of moving parts.

Overall, these experiences taught me how to be adaptive in my leadership, manage different types of people and serve as an effective advocate for those I represent. These are all skills that I believe to be crucial to serving effectively as 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 I have experienced how collaboration through ASDA can truly change the trajectory of our career paths. I am grateful to have been able to be active at the district level throughout my time in dental school and have learned from the amazing people I have had the privilege to work with. Reflection is an important part of improvement, and I have learned a lot through observing the work of some great past trustees. These experiences have significantly contributed to my growth as a professional, leader and advocate. As District Trustee, I want to increase access to those same opportunities for other ASDA members.

I plan to build on successful initiatives while adding in ways to carry the district to new heights. Examples of this include a more robust communication system to better regulate the dissent of information. This will allow national and district wide initiatives to better reach each ASDA member, allowing maximal benefit of great initiatives. Additionally, I would love to further unify the schools by being an effective and approachable liaison for all schools in District 9. I plan to be active in ensuring that District 9's voices are heard while feeling represented and supported. Finally, I'd encourage and educate further on all the benefits of being a part of ASDA, from wellness to advocacy, there is a spot in ASDA for so many different people, which strengthens the organization a whole.

What are 2-3 issues important to dental students?

Three issues that are important to dental school students include financial literacy, overall wellness, and maximizing their time in dental school. As education costs rise, and the path to higher education becomes more complex, it is not uncommon for students to feel underprepared and overwhelmed. Specifically, in speaking with my colleagues, many feel inadequately prepared to navigate the business side of running a practice and debt management. As District Trustee, I plan to encourage advocacy, and access to information through the multitude of ASDA resources. Increasing awareness of the voice and power dental students have can truly make a difference in our career field. This will help students make informed decisions that can be tailored to their individual goals and situation.

With the time commitment and stress of dental school, many students have a hard time finding harmony between school and their personal lives. Without adequate support, this can easily

lead to a cycle of stress, and underperformance. In this role, I plan to introduce wellness initiatives that promote and build habits that ensure success throughout dental school.

Finally, many students want to be involved outside of class or clinic. However, how to engage remains in question. With an already demanding schedule, an important role of the District Trustee to be the bridge between students and the opportunities to making the most of their time in dental school. Through my secretarial roles I've found I can improve visibility and accessibility so that students can maximize their time while strengthening ASDA.