

CHAPTER HANDBOOK



ASDA
American Student Dental Association

Chapter Organization and Leadership

Developing a Chapter Constitution & Bylaws

A constitution and bylaws provides the direction, leadership and cohesiveness to achieve chapter goals. All chapters must have a current, electronic version of their constitution & bylaws on file with national ASDA, as well as copies of the constitution declaration form and affiliation agreement signed by two chapter officers.

A template for chapter constitution and bylaws, constitution declaration and affiliation agreement is available [online](#) and contains sections of ASDA's national bylaws that are mandatory for all chapters. Connect with national ASDA at Membership@ASDAnet.org with questions.

Establishing your Local Leadership Team

ASDA chapters are asked to have an Executive Committee consisting of the following positions – President, Vice-President or President-Elect, Secretary and Treasurer. Additional positions may be needed by the chapter to carry out the functions and activities of the chapter. Work with national ASDA to develop your chapter's positions, review position descriptions and document positions in your chapter's bylaws.

Selection of Officers

Officer election and appointment procedures

Chapters should hold elections for the Executive Committee on an annual basis, as defined in your chapter's constitution and bylaws.

If your chapter has the President-Elect position, then your chapter uses a succession process. This means that the member voted into the President-Elect role automatically becomes the Chapter President the following year. If your chapter has the Vice President position, then your chapter uses an election process. This means that each year the President and Vice President are elected.

The new Executive Committee members should be selected in the spring. By holding elections in the spring, there is overlap with the outgoing leadership. Be sure to inform national ASDA and your district trustees when leaders turn over. This is essential to keeping your chapter informed of important information from the national level.

Work with national ASDA to establish the positions, timing, and election procedures for your chapter and have the information appropriately documented in your chapter bylaws.

Find a Chapter Advisor

Each chapter is required to select a chapter advisor and to submit the advisor's name to the national ASDA. Inviting a faculty member to serve as your chapter's advisor is one way to gain an inside track with administration. Faculty members can serve as an excellent

resource when it comes time to make difficult chapter decisions or to carry out the procedures set in the constitution & bylaws. This person can also help guide your chapter's relationship with the dean and with state/local dental societies. We suggest that you select someone who is an ADA member or involved in organized dentistry. Select an individual who understands students and is active in the state or local dental society. Some chapters have found it beneficial to have more than one advisor due to busy schedules of faculty.

Setting Chapter Goals

Your Executive Committee should determine what goals your chapter should focus on for the year. During the year, you can monitor your progress and reward leaders for their success. Share these goals with your district trustee so they can assist in keeping you on track.

All goals must be measurable. For example, do not write a goal that states, "Increase membership this year." A well-written goal will explain *how much* of an increase your chapter is working toward. It should read, "Increase membership by 20 percent." That way, it will be easy for you to measure your success.

When listing your chapter goals, you should determine which category the goal falls into, such as membership, communication, organization & leadership, fundraising, organized dentistry, chapter activities, advocacy, etc. Set a deadline for each goal and assign the Secretary the responsibility for overseeing the accomplishment of the goals. The Secretary should work with the Treasurer to identify expense and revenues. The Secretary may assign the goals and budget overview to specific committees who are then responsible for providing updates to the Secretary.

Leadership Meetings

There are two types of leadership meetings your chapter should conduct. The first type of meeting is for the Executive Committee. During this meeting, the Executive Committee meets and reviews high level information for the chapter, such as a budget report from the Treasurer and an update from the Secretary on the status of chapter goals.

The second type of meeting is a meeting of all chapter leaders. During this meeting, the Executive Committee and any chapter leadership positions described in the chapter bylaws meet. These meetings provide time for all leaders to provide updates. This is also a time to have general leadership development. Bi-monthly meetings should allow enough time to communicate important national ASDA issues, hear reports from each officer, discuss new business and review upcoming chapter activities.

For both types of meetings, the president of the chapter will preside. Your chapter's constitution and bylaws should specify the frequency of these meetings. An agenda should be created prior to each meeting and sent out ahead of time. Minutes should be taken for each meeting and approved at the start of each meeting. The Secretary is responsible for drafting the agenda and minutes. The President should review and approve the agenda prior to it being sent out to those in attendance. The President should also review the minutes prior to the next meeting.

Prior to the meeting, make a list of things to do and consider logistics, such as the number of people attending, the size of the room, audio-visual needs and agenda.

Meeting planning tips:

- Set a regular meeting time and location.
- Always have a written agenda.
- Distribute a schedule of events for the year to your local leaders.
- Keep your leaders informed of any changes to this schedule.
- Every local leader should attend your meetings and give a report. (All absences should be excused prior to the meeting in writing.)
- Show your leaders that you appreciate their hard work and participation.
- Make the meetings fun!

General Membership Meetings

Your chapter should hold monthly membership meetings. Membership meetings are informative, educational and serve as an essential communication vehicle for all ASDA members and interested faculty at your school. Meeting topics can include membership benefits, ASDA's legislative agenda, opportunities for national positions, resolutions and more.

Leadership Training for New Officers

Expectations should ideally be outlined early by thoroughly training officers. It is also a key component to ensuring continuity, carrying out the work of the chapter and serving members. Elements of a thorough training program include:

- Formal presentation about the association
- Responsibilities of each position
- Goal setting session
- Training period during which new leaders assume increasing responsibilities under the supervision of the appropriate outgoing leader

Leadership Training Checklist

Below is a checklist for implementing a training program. You should schedule training right after chapter elections/appointments to ensure your leadership team is well prepared for the year. Remember do not simply hand out the information in this handbook but explain the information and encourage group discussion.

Three weeks before the meeting:

- Distribute the *ASDA Chapter Handbook* and position descriptions to each leader and instruct them to familiarize themselves with the content prior to the meeting.
- Set a date, time and location for your training event. Schedule this event within one month of local chapter elections/appointments.
- Reserve the meeting room and order any food or drink for the meeting. If virtual, select the software program you will be using.
- Invite all chapter leaders to attend. Explain that the training meeting is mandatory for all new leaders.

- Draft an agenda to help your group stay on task and be more productive. It is important that you tailor this agenda to fit the needs and interests of your chapter.
- Distribute position descriptions for each leader.

Two weeks before:

- Choose the speakers or presenters for the meeting. Consider asking a faculty member or state society officer to facilitate the leadership training.
- Invite each presenter and tell them what topics they will need to cover. Provide them with the appropriate handouts for the meeting.
- Encourage speakers to be well versed on their assigned topics.
- Ask presenters if they will need audio-visual equipment for their presentation.
- Confirm attendance of each presenter in writing.

One week before:

- Make copies or e-mail out all handouts for each leader attending.
- Finalize the agenda and provide to each leader.
- Practice your presentation. Meet with your presenters to get organized and review the final agenda.
- Send a reminder to attendees or call each person the evening before the meeting.

On meeting day:

- Plan to arrive about 20 minutes early to review your notes and check any AV equipment, food and the room setup. If virtual, setup the meeting 15 minutes early.
- As leaders arrive, be sure to introduce yourself. This will help to break the ice when you begin speaking.
- Be positive. For many leaders, this will be their first introduction to ASDA. Show them why it is important to be involved.

After the meeting:

- Send a written thank you note to all presenters and attendees.
- Ask the secretary to type up a leadership roster, a chapter goal sheet, an activity calendar and revised position descriptions for the next meeting.
- Send a new leadership roster to national ASDA and your district trustee.

Establishing Relationships with Your School's Administration

The Executive Committee, and especially the President, are responsible for establishing and maintaining a good relationship with the school's administration. This includes:

- Asking the dean to attend recruitment events, such as lunch and learns for first-year students, to show his/her support of the chapter.
- Informing the dean of recent accomplishments made at the local and national level.
- Asking the dean's opinion on issues facing your chapter, including membership recruitment and retention.
- Communicating with the administration on a regular basis.
- Writing a report for the dean after any meetings and events that your chapter attends or inviting them to local chapter events.

- Thanking the dean for sending local members to national meetings.

Low market share/member engagement and poor faculty support are often related, so improving your chapter's relationship with administration is a worthwhile goal.

Virtual Meeting Etiquette

Your chapter may utilize virtual meetings for the chapter as well as meetings with external groups. Be sure to review virtual meeting etiquette with your members.

For professional virtual meetings and events:

- Keep video camera on to stay engaged. Be fully present during the duration of the session/meeting.
- Avoid eating or snacking during the virtual event.
- Remove distractions like cell phones and other people entering the room you are in.
- Have a clean, non-distracting background.
- Wear professional clothes.
- Avoid using your phone and having side conversations.
- Be cautious of time and be sure to respect the meeting start/end times.
- Use Zoom features (ie raising hand, chat box) when appropriate.
- Mute yourself when not speaking.
- Out of respect for everyone sharing their insights and experience, keep cameras on, maintain open body language and a professional posture.
- Mention each other by name.
- Treat a virtual ASDA meeting the same as an in-person ASDA meeting.

For social and casual virtual meetings, the etiquette items listed above still apply. In addition to those consider the following:

- Take cues from what others are doing to set the tone.
- It is often helpful to let attendees know before the virtual meeting if cameras will be required and what type of dress is appropriate.

Finances

Adequate operating funds are essential to sponsor various member activities and programs. To achieve this, a chapter needs to have a working budget of all necessary expenses, balanced against the revenue earned through local dues and raising funds. You may find that additional funds are needed to support activities, events and travel to national meetings.

Obtaining a Federal Tax ID Number

To open a checking account, you will be required to supply a Federal Tax ID Number or Employer Identification Number (EIN). Many vendors will require your EIN on a W-9 form. If you are unable to use your school's EIN, you can establish one for your chapter. Go to <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fss4.pdf> to fill out an online SS-4 application to obtain a tax ID number. Be sure to keep a copy of this document for your chapter's records and send

one to the central office for file. Keep in mind, once you receive a Federal Tax ID Number, your chapter will be required to file income tax returns annually with the IRS. It will be imperative your chapter keep accurate financial records.

Group Exemption

Filing for group exemption with ASDA is the easiest way for chapters to obtain tax-exempt status from the federal government. ASDA chapters that have been granted a group tax exemption by the IRS do not have to pay tax on income that is related to its tax exempt purpose. The general 'tax exempt' purpose of your chapter is to protect and advance the rights, interests and welfare of dental students. Tax exemption does not mean your chapter is exempt from *all* federal income tax. Your chapter must still complete an annual form 990 return and pay tax on profits from "unrelated business activities" such as advertising. Several forms are required to obtain tax exempt status through National's group exemption. The list of required documents can be found on [ASDA's website](#) under the chapter exemption section. Once your chapter is part of the group exemption, it is not necessary to submit the forms again.

The IRS does require your chapter to submit an annual report by May 15 every year. Your chapter must include the ASDA group exemption number on its annual report. Depending on your chapter's annual gross receipts (which is defined as the total amount received from all sources during its annual accounting period without subtracting any costs or expenses), the IRS requires your chapter to submit one of the following forms:

- Form 990-N. If your chapter has \$50,000 or less in annual gross receipts for the calendar year, submit Form 990-N to the IRS. ASDA can complete Form 990-N for your chapter, as long as you provide authorization in writing by completing a summary financial document provided in February.
- Form 990-EZ. If your chapter has more than \$50,000 in annual gross receipts for any calendar year, your chapter should submit Form 990-EZ. Your chapter is responsible for completing its own Form 990-EZ.

Additionally, a chapter that has \$1,000 or more in taxable income (on activities such as advertising in chapter newsletters or websites) must file Form 990-T and pay tax on its profit (income minus expenses). You can find any of the above forms at www.irs.gov.

If chapters fail to submit an annual report (Form 990-N or 990-EZ) for three consecutive years, you automatically lose your tax-exempt status, so it is really important to file taxes each year.

Please note that your chapter should keep all financial records for at least seven years, in the unlikely event it is ever audited by the IRS.

These rules are applicable to chapters—and all exempt organizations—whether or not they are part of a group exemption. The group exemption only grants tax exempt status on a group basis. It does not in any way change the IRS filing requirements for chapters.

Tax Exempt Status for State and Local Sales Taxes

If your chapter will be purchasing merchandise for a fundraiser (T-shirts, scrubs, etc.), it is important to note that ASDA chapters are **not** exempt from paying state or local sales tax. It is recommended that chapters investigate whether their school is exempt from paying sales tax and if so, determine if the merchandise can be purchased through the school.

Membership and Communication

One of the roles of ASDA chapters is to recruit and engage members. This section provides membership marketing and communication strategies to build and strengthen your chapter.

Membership Drive

The first step to introducing students to ASDA is holding a successful membership drive. Recruited chapters should use this opportunity to get students to join or renew. Auto enroll chapters should use this event to inform members of their benefits and encourage them to sign up for volunteer opportunities. The drive should be held in the fall as soon as school starts. Many chapters hold this event as part of an ASDA Fever Week where activities are held each day targeted at different classes. Download the how-to guide on organizing an [ASDA Fever Week](#) for ideas.

Below are seven key steps to holding a successful drive.

STEP 1: *Have a confident and well-informed team*

Be sure your ASDA team understands the organization and is ready to answer any questions your colleagues may have (*see the next section on ASDA Membership Statements for sample questions*). Be a source of information. Review the benefits of ASDA membership so all are well versed and can answer questions.

STEP 2: *Recruit and engage incoming first-year students*

Plan your first-year recruitment/engagement campaign as early as possible in the school year. Reach out with a letter and an application (for recruited programs). Then, schedule time for a presentation during their orientation. Host a lunch for the students following your presentation and invite the dean, faculty and members of your administration. Advertise and make sure the ASDA name is highly visible. Encourage them to volunteer and get involved in chapter activities. Check out the chapter membership recruitment section of the website for templates: <https://www.asdanet.org/index/get-involved/chapter-management-resources/Membership-amp-Recruitment>.

STEP 3: *Target D2, D3 and D4 students individually*

After recruiting first-year students, focus on the other classes. Plan to have class representatives give brief presentations about ASDA during class or lunch. The message should focus on benefits and information relevant to students in that class. Inform students where and for how long chapter leaders will be accepting dues. E-mail reminders to join and

renew membership in ASDA. Check out the chapter membership recruitment section of the website for templates: <https://www.asdanet.org/index/get-involved/chapter-management-resources/Membership-amp-Recruitment>.

STEP 4: Sign up current members for another year of membership

Refer to your chapter's membership files and identify which students are members. Approach these students and explain that you are collecting membership dues for the next year. Explain any new membership benefits and discuss upcoming chapter activities. Most importantly, be sure to gather updated contact information so that members will receive their benefits.

STEP 5: Set up an ASDA table

Once you have made a presentation about ASDA, set up an ASDA table in a common area where students congregate to eat lunch or spend time between classes. This will give you an opportunity to answer questions, accept dues from all class levels and distribute benefit information to new members. This is also a good place to sign up volunteers for chapter activities. Your ASDA representatives should help staff this booth.

STEP 6: Engage in one-on-one recruitment

Now is the time to approach people who have not yet signed up. Your goal is to determine each person's reason for not joining and try to overcome his or her objections. Students can be approached in the pre-clinical lab, clinics or in between classes. Start with students who are current members, then concentrate on those who have never been members.

STEP 7: Engage in one-on-one dues collection

Be prepared to accept dues during the one-on-one recruitment phase. Be sure to have an application form and an envelope or app (such as Venmo, Paypal or Square) to accept payment.

You will encounter students who agree to join but are not able to pay dues on the spot. You can either give the student an application so they can send in their dues at their own convenience, arrange to accept payment at a later time or refer them to the online application. Keep accurate lists of unpaid members and track the payment dates.

ASDA Membership Statements

To make an informed decision about joining or renewing membership in ASDA, an individual must understand the benefits of being a part of the association and have any concerns addressed. As an ASDA recruiter, it is your job to understand their concerns and provide the appropriate information to reinforce the decision to join or renew membership in ASDA. The following five ASDA membership statements were developed to help you understand and respond to the basic concerns of potential members.

Question 1: *What does it mean to be a member of ASDA?*

Statement 1: Predoctoral membership dues cover membership in ASDA and the ADA as a student member and entitles you to the benefits of both organizations. ASDA membership represents a first step toward a lifelong involvement in organized dentistry.

Question 2: *What is the value of organized dentistry?*

Statement 2: Organized dentistry describes the combined efforts of all the organizations (such as ASDA, ADA, ADEA, AGD, etc.) that work together to positively contribute to the dental profession. As a student, your professional life is being shaped by forces in and outside of dentistry. One of the most important steps you can take to supplement your education and protect your career investment is to stay informed and involved in the changing landscape of your profession through participation in organized dentistry.

Question 3: *What are the benefits offered to members?*

Statement 3: ASDA offers several tangible and intangible benefits, [highlight the benefits that mean the most to you].

Facts about ASDA and ADA Membership

Predoctoral students enrolled in a CODA-accredited dental school in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, including foreign-trained dentists in advanced standing programs, are eligible for membership in both ASDA and the ADA. Annual membership runs from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. National dues provide membership in both ASDA and a student membership in the ADA.

Each ASDA predoctoral student member is issued an ADA number. This number enables members to receive various benefits and discounts. Members can find their numbers by logging into their profile on ASDA's website or by contacting ASDA at Membership@ASDAnet.org or 312-440-2795.

In addition to predoctoral membership, ASDA offers membership categories for predental and international dental students.

What do you gain from being an ASDA member?

ASDA is the voice for 23,000+ dental students on many important issues. Your membership strengthens this voice and supports the nationwide network of dental students working to protect your rights and further your interests in the legislative, academic and professional arenas.

Recruitment Techniques

Use National ASDA to help you recruit

If you feel that you are not promoting membership convincingly to a prospect, you may want to turn to national ASDA for assistance. To do this, ask the student if he or she would like to receive more information about ASDA via e-mail. This is a way to exit the conversation while allowing the prospect to keep his or her options open. Keep a list of these non-members' names and e-mail addresses and send it to membership@asdanet.org. Membership staff will follow up by sending membership and benefit information.

Have a membership table at every ASDA event and meeting

Have a list of members and non-members available at every event. To obtain a current list of your members, log into the chapter portal in [My ASDA](#) and download a roster under chapter reports. If you are charging admission fees, acknowledge your members by thanking them for their membership and reminding them that their admission fee is discounted. When non-members approach the table, give them the opportunity to pay membership dues and receive the discounted admission price.

Maintain a high level of member service

Give prompt and factual responses to questions. Solicit feedback on a regular basis. Consider having a sign-in sheet at your membership table for members who are not receiving publications, then email to membership@asdanet.org to look into the issue. Be sure the sheet contains names, addresses, e-mail addresses and membership numbers. Think of common questions from members and try to address them in advance. Use national ASDA as a resource.

Conversational recruitment techniques

Personal contact is the best method to recruit members because it addresses the basic need for recognition by one's peers. Having a recruitment conversation with a fellow student should be just like having a conversation about any topic. There is no need to be pushy or aggressive or follow a script. All that is required is having enough knowledge about ASDA to talk about it comfortably. You should be able to describe the association as if you were describing to a friend all the reasons you like your favorite restaurant. Be in control of the conversation so that you get the desired result: recruit the member (and collect dues for members at recruited chapters). Here are a few ideas:

Establish a rapport with the person.

For example, start the conversation by talking about a recent exam or what the person did over the weekend. Take a genuine interest in the person. This is not just a great way to recruit members, but you will also get to know your classmates better.

Casually direct the discussion to ASDA membership.

You could say, "I noticed you have not yet renewed your membership dues," or "ASDA is having a lunch speaker on practice management and I thought you might be interested in attending."

Be prepared to overcome any objections to membership.

Students' beliefs about ASDA may range from indifferent to extremely supportive. As a student leader, your job is to recognize an objection when you hear it, fill in any information gaps, clear up any misunderstandings and provide information on how the association meets their needs. Listen to issues that students have and describe how your chapter is addressing it locally or nationally.

Ask for the sale.

Your job is not complete until you discuss local and national dues. Either collect dues on the spot or arrange to collect them later.

Recruiting and Retaining Advanced Standing or IDP Students

Many dental schools have programs for foreign-trained dentists that allow them to enter dental school at an advanced level. These programs are commonly referred to as advanced standing (AS) or international dental programs (IDP). AS/IDP students are seeking further training in the U.S. and may plan to return to their home countries to practice dentistry or find a job in the U.S. These students may require a different approach in order to understand the benefits available to them. It is essential when recruiting these students to establish trust and take time to thoroughly explain the benefits of belonging to ASDA.

Advanced standing students look to ASDA for the following reasons:

- Access to information on becoming licensed to practice in the U.S.
- Subscriptions to publications
- Post-graduate and career resources

You may want to organize a special meeting for AS/IDP students and invite a trusted faculty member who is supportive of organized dentistry to discuss its importance. The meeting should be informal and open to questions. By presenting the organization as a benefit provider, students will be less skeptical about investing in ASDA.

Have a leader send out welcome letters/emails to advanced standing students. In the letter, make them aware of the representation they have within the organization's leadership.

Chapter Communications

An important component in member engagement is regular and reliable communication. Use bulletin boards, social media, class announcements, newsletters, in-person meetings, e-mails and a chapter website to share local and national ASDA news and initiatives. Regular communication with members keeps ASDA at the forefront and helps members understand that they are part of a vital, dynamic organization.

Newsletters

Newsletters should provide more in-depth information on a variety of topics of local and national interest. Appoint a newsletter editor to delegate writing assignments, develop a production schedule, proofread and edit the articles and lay out the stories. Your chapter can distribute its newsletter to members electronically or as hard copies.

Chapter Websites

A website demonstrates that a chapter is progressive and concerned with meeting the needs of its members. Make sure you keep your website current.

Other Communication Methods

Bulletin boards are great for publicizing events, member benefits and upcoming deadlines. Obtain bulletin board space in high traffic areas and change your display frequently. Flyers

can highlight upcoming local and national ASDA events, happenings from your state or local dental society and deadlines for applying for local and national ASDA leadership positions.

Class announcements should be used for recruitment purposes, to communicate new benefit information and to publicize local activities. Be sure to include information from national ASDA.

Monthly membership meetings are an effective way of establishing communication with members. Meetings should take place at the same time and place each month. Each meeting should include reports from each leader, upcoming activities and events, important national ASDA news, information on national ASDA leadership positions and solicitation of input for House of Delegates resolutions.

E-mail and social media are easy ways to keep in touch with your members. An e-mail message or post is a good way to remind members of deadlines and upcoming events.

Other easy and quick ways to keep ASDA and your chapter visible include:

- Calendar with updated ASDA events in a visible location or on a Google calendar
- “Restroom” newsletter with advertising/updates (captive audience)
- Elevator and lobby flyers
- Table triangles with updates (student lounge)
- Rotate flyers on school TV
- In between classes, utilize projectors to display information in classrooms
- Send letters introducing ASDA to incoming first years’ home address
- YouTube videos

Public Relations for ASDA Chapters

Make sure all students at your school, not just chapter leaders, are aware of all that your ASDA chapter has done and continues to do.

- Promote the accomplishments of chapter members via bulletin boards, class announcements, and chapter or school newsletters, websites and social media.
- Develop a fact sheet on your chapter and place it on your membership table at each meeting and event.
- Communicate regularly with your school administration. Enlist support in helping your chapter increase its visibility.
- Sell ASDA apparel to raise funds and increase your chapter’s brand.
- Send a press release to your school on community service events that your chapter is organizing. Keep the press release brief highlighting who you are, the what and when of your event, how it helps the community, and contact information.

Chapters should increase their profile within organized dentistry. Submit articles about chapter activities to your alumni publication, community newspaper, national ASDA publications, and state and local dental society publications. Article topics can range from community dental education to pre- and post- vendor fair publicity to ASDA functions.

Activities

A successful chapter holds a variety of enriching activities for their members. This section provides quick strategies to increase visibility, gain support and increase member involvement.

Activity Planning Tips

Plan ahead and plan early. You cannot expect to have a great event if you begin planning only a few weeks in advance. Speakers, dental supply companies and representatives from the local dental society often need several months' notice.

1. Schedule the event on the school calendar as soon as possible.
2. Clear the date with your dean of student affairs to make sure it does not conflict with other school events.
3. Assign a committee to oversee logistics.
4. Invite guests to your events.
5. Always extend a personal invitation to your dean and other faculty.

Advertise. Plan to advertise three weeks in advance for a small event and six weeks for a major event. Target your audience by using bulletin boards, class announcements, social media, mailbox flyers, e-mail, school newsletter and website, and word of mouth.

Involve non-ASDA members, faculty and administration as much as possible. This will show non-members how much fun ASDA events can be. If your activity is open to non-members, consider charging them a higher admission and decide whether they are eligible for any door prizes or raffles, since chapter activities are a privilege of membership. Always provide non-members the opportunity to join during local events.

Follow up on details. Send written confirmation to speakers, vendors and sponsors.

Create an appropriate budget. Meet with your chapter treasurer to determine your budget. Consider enlisting corporate sponsorship to offset costs.

Thank the participants. Send a thank-you letter to anyone who donated time, products or money. They will be more likely to help you again in the future.

Create a paper trail. Keep detailed records of events and gatherings so that similar activities can be replicated in the future. Compile relevant information in a binder at a common location or store documents online through Google Drive or DropBox.

Activities Checklist

- ☐ Decide the type of activity you would like to plan (fundraising, member service, career guidance, social, speaking event, outreach, etc.)

- ❑ Determine who will be invited (members, non-members, faculty, state society members, etc.)
- ❑ Determine your event budget
- ❑ Set the date and time
- ❑ Estimate the number of people who will attend
- ❑ Reserve a meeting room
- ❑ Choose your menu. (Many room rental agreements, require you to order food from a designated caterer.)

Plan a Variety of Interesting Activities

Advocacy: Advocacy programs provide members the opportunity to have a voice in issues of concern to dental education and the dental profession.

Social: Social activities are important because they provide members with an opportunity to spend time together and socialize outside of school.

Organized Dentistry: These activities increase exposure to state and local dental societies and the ADA. These events are essential for promoting lifelong involvement in organized dentistry.

Community Service: Chapters that are already well-organized and active may want to extend their influence by reaching out to the local community.

Fundraising: Many activities designed to raise funds can also function as member service, career development, educational and social events. These activities benefit members, as well as the chapter.

Educational: Invite local dentists, faculty or experts in leadership to present programs that enhance members' clinical training. Work with your local or state society to offer members CE for the program.

Representation at ASDA National Events

Attendance at national events is instrumental to the success of your chapter. It is important that your chapter is represented at the meetings and those attending bring back information and ideas for your members.

The registration fee for each meeting varies, dependent upon factors such as location, venue, food and beverage costs, audio-visual needs, etc. Chapters are responsible for securing funding to attend national meetings. This includes the registration fees and airfare/transportation.

It can be difficult to schedule time away from class work and patients to attend meetings, especially when there is minimal support from your administration.

More information on ASDA's national meetings can be found here:
<https://www.asdanet.org/index/programs-events/national-meetings>.

District Events

Many districts organize events to bring members together. These meetings encourage members to become leaders on the local and national levels and strengthen the chapters within the district. Some districts hold formal events with speakers and vendor fairs where other districts organize a retreat focused on networking and idea sharing.

Because these events are more local and the costs are lower, chapters can maximize the number of members they send. This is a good opportunity to identify passionate first- and second-year students and introduce them to ASDA. District meetings are often the first step to getting involved. Contact your [district trustee](#) for dates and details.

Determining Who Should Attend National Meetings

Your chapter may have more students interested in attending the meetings than you can afford to send. It can be a difficult decision to select those that best represent the chapter and have the potential to bring back value to the chapter. Here are some ideas to make the selection process easier:

- Have interested attendees write a 300-word essay why "leadership training is important to me." Top essay writers are selected by chapter leaders or faculty to attend.
- Build out an online application with different fields for the member to complete so they can explain how they'd benefit from going.
- Send 2-3 members from each class (D1, D2, D3, D4) to ensure legacy training. Encourage them to attend sessions related to their experience level or interest in holding future leadership positions at chapter.
- Cover the hotel and registration fee for the event but require members to cover the transportation costs.
- Host a contest where the top X winners receive registration (recruiting new members, writing for your chapter newsletter/website, selling raffle tickets, etc.).
- Have interested members fill out a short "blind" application and either have an advisor judge the applicants or have your executive committee judge. Applications should not have a name associated so that it is truly based on the application that utilizes short essays and prior leadership roles.
- Raffle off the cost of one registration package based on levels of participation in ASDA. More participation = more times your name is in the raffle = more chances you will be selected to attend.

Regardless of who attends, it is important that they share what they learned so it benefits your entire chapter. Members will feel more vested in the association if they know that the local dues they pay are being used to strengthen the chapter. One idea is to require those who attend to present a lunch & learn or write an article for your chapter newsletter or website on their experience at the meeting. It is also important to thank your dean and administration and share the knowledge you gained to ensure their continuous support of student's attendance at future events.

Organized Dentistry

One of ASDA's objectives is to promote lifelong involvement in organized dentistry. ASDA chapters fulfill this objective by developing relationships with the local and state dental societies and facilitating graduates transition to the ADA.

Initiating Contact with Dental Societies

If your chapter has little or no contact with your state and local dental societies, this section will assist you in approaching these groups to develop a relationship. There are several ways to initiate contact with state and local dental societies. You might call the society's office and ask to speak to the executive director or staff person responsible for membership or the new dentist committee. Your chapter could write a letter to the society president. Visit [ADA](#) to obtain contacts for your state society.

Some points to include in your letter/email:

- Introduce your chapter and explain why your chapter would like to be involved with the society. (*i.e.*, "One of ASDA's organizational objectives is to promote lifelong involvement in organized dentistry. To meet this objective, we would like to increase our student involvement in your society.")
- Explain how your chapter would like to build a relationship with the dental society (*i.e.*, "Possible activities include representation in state society governance, planning a practice management day, speaking events, etc.")
- Explain how this can be a mutually beneficial relationship (*i.e.*, "By establishing a presence within the dental student community, state societies can begin to make connections with their future members.")
- Request a meeting to set goals and develop action plans.
- Invite the state society representative to contact you.
- Thank the society for its time and attention to your concerns.

Send a copy of the letter/email to your chapter advisor and dean to inform them of your efforts.

Building Relationships with State and Local Dental Societies

Appoint State and Local Dental Society Liaisons

A member of the chapter's Executive Committee should serve as the liaison to the state dental society. The liaison is responsible for attending society meetings, representing the chapter in the House of Delegates and reporting news of interest to chapter members.

Plan Cooperative Events and Programs

There are numerous opportunities for chapters to develop programs with their state and local dental societies, such as state lobby days. See the *Activities* section for details on how to plan organized dentistry events.

Society and Chapter Meetings

Your chapter can increase its visibility within your state and local dental societies by attending their meetings and conferences. Talk to your societies about possible funding to attend conferences and represent dental students at business meetings. Your chapter can also offer to promote the state or local conference at your dental school.

You can invite leaders from the society to visit your chapter membership meetings and give an interesting presentation. You may want to recommend one of your speakers to present at an ASDA national meeting. Contact your district trustee with your suggestions.

Practice Management Resource Guide

One of the benefits of a strong relationship with your area dental societies is the abundance of resources available. For example societies have a wealth of information on running a practice and licensure requirements in your state.

If your state society publishes a listing of practice management resources, make these materials available to your members. If not, consider working with your state or local dental society to develop various resources that would benefit your members.

Gaining Representation within your State and Local Dental Societies

Lobbying Strategies

If your chapter has a sound leadership structure, a high membership market share and a strong relationship with your state and local society, you may want to increase the level of student representation within the state society.

The following strategies can be used by chapters to successfully lobby two voting student delegates in the state dental societies:

Do your homework. Be prepared to answer all questions before they are asked. Common questions cover the need for students to vote or gain increased representation at the state level, recruiting student members into the state society and ASDA membership statistics. Be prepared to discuss the advantage of all parties granting increased voting privileges. You may mention that ASDA has five voting seats in the ADA House of Delegates.

Test the water. Contact faculty members who hold leadership positions in the state society to determine how ASDA is perceived and what obstacles the chapter may need to overcome. This will help you determine where to concentrate your efforts. Different approaches may be required for each contact so tailor the presentation to the individual.

Formulate a plan. If there is more than one dental school in your state, try to coordinate your efforts. Decide how you want to allocate votes, who needs to be contacted and why these changes are important. Determine a timetable for the implementation of your plan. Be prepared and portray ASDA as a professional organization.

Institute your plan. Do not become discouraged. There will be individuals you will never persuade. Present your viewpoint, be diplomatic and move on. You are interested in the majority, not the minority.

Obtain feedback. Regular feedback should be obtained from society members and ASDA leaders in the field. Flexibility is the key to success and feedback may stimulate modification of your plan.

Do not give up. You may not succeed initially but change your strategy and try again.

Advocacy

ASDA's mission statement expresses the organization's role as an advocate for dental students. To fulfill this role at the national level, the ASDA House of Delegates develops policy statements. The association then notifies dental school deans, other dental associations (such as the ADA), state dental licensing boards and legislators of our policies. Each ASDA chapter is responsible for fulfilling the advocacy role at the local level.

Identify Student Advocacy Needs

If your chapter has not traditionally been active in its role as an advocate, you should begin by identifying which local organizations address student issues and determine where your chapter fits in. For example:

If your chapter is also student government, then your advocacy role is multi-faceted. The chapter may deal with many concerns: student body issues, school policies, representation within organized dentistry, and national and state legislative issues.

If your chapter is within or under student government, then your advocacy role is to educate members about national issues affecting all dental students, solicit member concerns for representation in the ASDA House of Delegates and represent school-wide legislative concerns.

If your chapter is separate from student government, then you should determine what functions this body and other organizations are unable to fulfill. For example, ASDA chapters are often more readily prepared to provide political education and advocacy than other student organizations.

You can also review ASDA's [policies](#) to evaluate whether the environment at your dental school is in line with these policies. Remember that the national association is behind you and is ready to provide advice and support.

Positioning the Chapter as an Advocate

Stay Informed of Local Issues

Chapter leaders must stay informed of what is going on at school beyond their own academic requirements. Your leadership team should always be aware of school policies and news affecting students. Here are some suggestions for staying informed:

- Attend student council meetings.
- Read school and alumni publications.
- Designate at least one chapter representative to attend all alumni functions.
- Listen to the concerns of students, discuss them among the chapter leadership and be prepared to take action, if necessary.
- Keep connected with other schools in your state or district to collaborate on issues or initiatives affecting dental students in your area.

Develop an Ongoing Relationship with the Administration

Strong chapters enjoy a positive relationship with the dental school dean, faculty and other key staff in administration. Many chapters have regularly scheduled meetings with the dean to exchange information.

At some schools, an ASDA representative sits on faculty committees that allow student representation, including the curriculum, admissions and the dean selection committees. As the voice of dental students at your school, your ASDA chapter should seek representation on school committees that affect students.

Represent Your Chapter at State and National Levels

Many state societies invite dental students to attend their meetings and events where state issues are addressed. Chapter leaders should attend these events to represent the local chapter and student voice in important issues.

Questions?

Connect with national ASDA at Membership@ASDAnet.org.