



Executive Committee Short Answer Questions – Alex Mitchell, Temple '18

1) ***What leadership experiences have equipped you for this national role?***

As a candidate for president, it is imperative to understand ASDA from the ground up. That is where I began, as a pre-dental ASDA member breaking out of my shell and traveling to Chicago for my first National Leadership Conference. That experience quickly led me to taking on three ASDA leadership roles when I began dental school -- as class rep, pre-dental chair, and district 3 pre-dental liaison. By the end of my first year, I was elected to be my chapter president. Some struggles I encountered early on were an inherited loss of growth, a lack of ASDA events, and poor communication with the school's administration. I chose to see these challenges as an opportunity to build a team from the ground up. Rebuilding our chapter taught me about engaging student leaders, creating successful events, as well as negotiating with administration, faculty, and vendors. As a trustee, I continued to hone my leadership skills, while getting to know my chapters and their leaders. I focused on areas where we could make the biggest impact. A notable success this year as a district was having three teams led by potential trustees. This allowed meetings to be hyper focused and, more importantly, it engaged and trained many potential national leaders for next year.

2) ***How do you work with or lead a team?***

I have always believed that Steven Covey put it best, saying "Leadership is communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they are inspired to see it in themselves." I have led all of my teams by this motto, and that was the case when it came time to create my district cabinet. After being chosen as trustee, I created a presidential council to discuss what they desired from our district cabinet. Once I had compiled their requests, I created two additional teams -- a chapter development team, and district meetings team. This process took more time for me initially, but it paid off in the end because each of the three teams was being led by a chair who would be trained to be a trustee. The way I chose people was unique. I went to the presidential council and I shared the new structure, bylaws, goals, and a cover letter, and asked them to share those with their students. Rather than use resumes and letters of intent, I wanted interested parties to review all the position descriptions and then call me for a half hour phone interview at their convenience. That gave me an opportunity to explain to each applicant how the district is set up, communicate the importance of what we were doing, and establish the role/roles they would be playing. Nothing is perfect, especially the first time, but I'm proud of what the team accomplished through shared goals and open communication!

3) ***Why are you interested in this leadership position and what skills do you possess that would benefit the association?***

At my first NLC as a pre-dental ASDA member, I would have been terrified at the prospect of running for the Executive Committee. How can people go through so many tortuous caucuses, deliver so many

formal and informal speeches, and be asked to dance while singing ASDA policies to the tune of their favorite Disney song? That fear has gradually diminished over the past few years as my experience, knowledge and leadership ability have grown. I am now excited for the challenge and even more for the opportunity to give back to an organization that has done so much for me. Thanks to ASDA and my upbringing, my greatest skills include working well with others, problem solving, and not letting pride get in the way of a great idea. My skills will benefit the association in the boardroom by keeping board discussion focused, promoting alternative viewpoints, and making a decision when the time is right. My skills will also help me strengthen our relationships with organizations such as the ADA, AGD, and ADEA. I recognize that our voice carries great influence among such groups because we are their future membership and I look forward to the challenge and excitement of working with them.

4) *What are 2-3 issues important to dental students and/or the position of president?*

Licensure is in an incredibly important issue facing dental students today and an issue the executive committee studies and speaks on frequently. For too long, we have seen patients put in harm's way and students who are forced to sign up for exams where they can fail automatically, or lose their money if a patient doesn't show up. Dental licensure exams today are neither comprehensive, nor do they protect the public. Students are too often not learning about these problems until they enter their senior year. The executive committee should aim to mandate that the trustee's begin seeking multiple potential replacements for the following year, upon beginning their term. Trustees carry the great majority of votes and thus their proper training is imperative to have the best future trustees to make decisions for ASDA's future. Further, if a trustee is unable to continue carrying out his or her duties, a quick election can be held and one of these members can step up.