



Speaker of the House Short Answer Questions - Chad Curtis, Columbia '19

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

As Head of the Legislative committee for our ASDA chapter, our team and I have worked diligently to bring awareness to the importance of dental advocacy to our entire school. This year, we have organized events through ADPAC to explain the importance of remaining a united force to best serve our patients and our profession. We have had meetings with politicians in New York City, including congresswoman Carolyn Maloney and assemblyman Keith Wright. And we have organized the New York State Dental Association Lobby Day in Albany, which will serve as an effort to present the important issues to our state representatives as well as prepare students for National Lobby Day.

Additionally, I am a member of the grassroots committee for the New York County Dental Society. This has been an experience that has forced me to think more broadly about the implications behind state legislation related to dentistry. At our meetings, I must present ideas to current practicing dentists, forcing me to look past the issues that only affect dental students and focus on the entire field of dentistry. This year we started the annual Student Legislative Day in New York City, which is an opportunity for members of the NYCDS and all students in District 2 to learn about current important issues in dentistry and how to create international dental standards.

These positions have given me the opportunity to develop the necessary organizational skills and knowledge of legislation related to dentistry to be an effective Speaker for ASDA.

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

In my past leadership roles before becoming legislative liaison for Columbia University, I always focused on leading by example, expecting that the people on my team would fall into place and do their jobs effectively. For example, at the University of South Carolina I was the president of the Table Tennis club, and when we had meetings to determine how to advance the club, I tried to have as much energy as possible and get the ball rolling on various tournaments or events we were planning. But, the other leaders in the club did not mirror my enthusiasm and made few contributions, causing many of the plans to fall short of my expectations.

I modified my leadership strategy by maintaining that same enthusiasm and taking on a more active, hands-on role that I have found to be more effective in ensuring that all required tasks are completed. When leading a team, my goal is to delegate responsibilities and tasks to the people most capable of completing them. In order to effectively delegate, I must understand everyone's strengths and

weaknesses. The most difficult part is to actually relinquish control of the situation and depend on others to accomplish our goals. Although this was initially difficult for me, after holding various leadership roles, I have practiced delegating and trusting my team, which is one of the reasons I believe our legislative committee has had such a successful year.

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

After attending NLC this year, I realized that the role of Speaker interests me more than any other position because it plays an integral role in providing guidance in the way of parliamentary procedure. Many of the proposals made are complex and debate may occur over possible solutions, which is why the Speaker must act as a mediator of the discussion. As Legislative Liaison, I have come to learn a great deal about current issues facing dentistry and I want to be a part of the solution, which is important for the Speaker position because I am and will remain knowledgeable of current proposals and potential solutions. My experiences attending schools in various states have led me to become a more open-minded individual, which will allow me to remain objective and impartial when hearing various arguments during board meetings or House sessions. My goals are that we, as a collective dental student body, will move towards solving problems with student debt and hopefully find an evidence-based alternative to the unethical use of live patients for licensure examinations.

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

The 3 most important issues facing dental students and dentistry are student debt, universal healthcare, and current licensure examinations.

Student debt is one of the primary issues that we should focus on because it affects the majority of dental students and dentists, facilitating a shift in dentistry from private practice to corporate dentistry. Student debt is increasing due to high interest rates on loans and increasing tuition prices. High interest rates drastically increase the amount of time it takes for graduates to pay off their loans. An even more significant issue is the standard practice of hiking tuition over 3% year after year, resulting in an astounding \$1.2 trillion in student debt in America.

The second issue, and most contentious, is universal healthcare. Dentists have largely avoided most of the implications behind the Affordable Care Act, other than the 2.3% device tax. Our society is trending toward a government run single payer healthcare system, and we need to be diligent in protecting our interests and the interests of our patients. This includes revoking medical device taxes, maintaining proper reimbursement for dental procedures, and avoiding burdensome regulations.

The third issue is related to live patient licensure exams and the continuity of the current examinations offered. Currently, there are too many board exams, complicating an already stressful process. As future dentists, we should advocate for a comprehensive board exam that is accepted in all states, while avoiding the ethical concerns associated with using live patients.