

Tyler Jenness

Candidate for President/VP

The University of Iowa College of Dentistry and Dental Clinics, Iowa City, IA

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How do you work with or lead a team?

In my leadership roles as ASDA Chapter President and District 8 Trustee, my philosophy on leadership centers around fostering a collaborative culture within the team. From the onset, I establish an open-door policy to develop an atmosphere where members are empowered to share ideas, seek guidance, and feel a sense of community within the team. This approach helps me stay connected with my team members and better understand what challenges and concerns they have. Whether it is taking a late-night phone call to brainstorm ideas or simply lending a listening ear, I make it a priority to be available for my team.

I believe in a systematic approach to effectuating productive teamwork. First, I meet with my team to establish clear goals, evaluate where we are, and determine the steps needed to move forward. We discuss and decide on specific actions, set deadlines, and delegate responsibilities based on individual strengths. By empowering team members with ownership of their roles, they remain motivated and engaged, knowing they're contributing to something bigger.

Routine check-ins are another key part of my leadership style. These meetings allow us to address challenges, celebrate progress, and identify areas where extra support may be needed. If the team faces difficulties, I'm always willing to step up and assist to ensure success.

A balance of collaboration, structure, and support helps me lead teams effectively while also fostering a strong sense of unity and purpose.

What leadership experiences have equipped you for the role of President/Vice President?

As chapter president, I gained experience understanding the challenges local chapter leaders face and where National ASDA can provide additional support. From event programming to fundraising difficulties, I witnessed firsthand the gaps that can arise without clear communication and resources. This grassroots perspective on the EC ensures the tripartite structure of ASDA functions seamlessly, bridging any disconnect between national leadership and general members. This role also taught me how to navigate disagreements within chapter leadership, a skill important when managing a board with differing opinions.

Serving as the District 8 Trustee broadened my understanding of the struggles chapters across different states encounter, such as conflicts with school administrations, low event attendance, and challenges faced by new chapters. Having a new chapter in my own district and hearing

where they encountered obstacles to getting their chapter running, I have become more aware of where additional support is needed. As ASDA welcomes new chapters, the EC must equip them with resources to confidently launch and sustain their programming, and I have the experience to do just that.

My experience on the Governance Committee deepened my understanding of ASDA's foundational documents, including bylaws and policies. This has prepared me to guide the association effectively, ensuring we remain aligned with our mission while adapting to future challenges. Having the background of being on the board of trustees and serving on this committee will allow me to contribute to the EC and direct our association with a significantly lessened learning curve.

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

Specific to the role of president, ASDA redistricting presents a unique hurdle and opportunity for the incoming Executive Committee (EC). As some districts remain the same, other districts face significant change and may likely need support from National ASDA in adjusting to the new norm. Ensuring new trustees are well-equipped for the transition will strengthen our growing association's foundation and preserve its place as the nation's strongest student dental association.

It comes as no surprise that rising tuition and student debt remain at the forefront of nearly every dental student's mind. ASDA must continue opening a dialogue about why tuition continues to rise while educational enhancements lag at a seemingly disproportional rate. We must continue advocating against rising dental educational costs and ways to curb existing debt such as expanded loan repayment options and increasing financial literacy education for our members. By fostering more conversations with stakeholders, we can start taking meaningful steps towards systemic change.

As unprecedented rates of anxiety and depression continue to affect dental students, it is clear there is a need for more mental wellness resources for our members. This year, my local chapter is launching our first Green Bandana training to help peers and faculty recognize and respond to peers in crisis. Expanding these kind of initiatives and investigating other areas ASDA can support its members will help ensure dental students receive the support they need.