

District 11

Alejandra Hernandez, Colorado 2026

How do you work with or lead a team?

I have always loved working with others, and I believe teamwork is an essential part of being a successful leader. Being a team player goes beyond simple collaboration; it requires skills like active listening, delegating tasks effectively, understanding team members' strengths and weaknesses, and fostering mutual respect.

As a leader, my first priority is building trust within my team. I want everyone around me to feel comfortable expressing their opinions and concerns without hesitation. Creating this environment is important because it empowers team members who may not have previously felt confident to speak up. I strive to be an advocate for everyone on my team, helping them recognize that their voice matters and that they have the ability to make a difference.

In addition to building trust, I lead by being goal-oriented. Having clearly defined and written-out goals gives the team a sense of direction and purpose. While flexibility is crucial to adapt to challenges or changes, having tangible goals helps align everyone with a shared vision.

Lastly, I prioritize acknowledging and celebrating the efforts of my team members. It is easy for leaders to overlook recognition, but I believe it's essential to consistently remind others that their hard work is valued. By providing encouragement and support, I strive to foster a collaborative atmosphere where everyone feels motivated and united in achieving success together.

Working with and leading a team is a privilege, and I am committed to ensuring every member feels valued, heard, and supported.

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

From a young age, I have been a social butterfly, which naturally led me to seek out communities I am passionate about and step into leadership roles. In college, I served as the President of the Pre-Dental Society at Arizona State University, where I gained valuable experience in organizing events, mentoring students, and fostering a supportive community for pre-dental students. This role taught me how to build relationships, advocate for others, and create meaningful opportunities for my peers.

In dental school, I expanded my leadership involvement further, serving as the Content Chair for Colorado ASDA for the past two years. This role introduced me to ASDA and helped me grow both personally and professionally. I developed skills in creative communication, member engagement, and teamwork, which have been instrumental in my development as a leader. As

the Executive Assistant for District 9 ASDA, I refined my organizational and time-management skills while supporting my cabinet in achieving its goals. My work as the Video Production Manager for National ASDA taught me how to collaborate across councils and network with dental students nationwide, ensuring our projects inspire and inform members across the country.

These experiences have prepared me to lead with empathy and work cohesively with others, whether in my own cabinet or as part of the Board of Trustees. Serving in a national position this past year solidified my passion for advocacy and leadership, equipping me with the skills and vision to succeed as District Trustee.

Why are you interested in the District Trustee role and what do you hope to accomplish in this position?

My first year in ASDA, I attended the District 9 conference and met that year's District Trustee. Not only was she an excellent student, but also a passionate leader committed to organized dentistry and the future of our profession. I was surprised to learn that District Trustees were dental students. She seemed so knowledgeable that I assumed she was already a dentist. That moment taught me that regardless of where you are in your dental journey, passion and dedication allow you to make an impact. You don't need to know everything about teeth to have compassion and the drive to improve our profession.

That realization inspired me to get involved in ASDA at the local, district, and national levels. While becoming a trustee once felt like an unattainable goal, my first-year self would be proud of the hard work I've put in over the past three years to pursue this opportunity.

I am drawn to the Trustee role because I love being an advocate, leader, and friend to those around me. I want to ensure people feel heard and to leave a positive impact. The upcoming redistricting felt like a sign. It excites me to join a district with Arizona, where I went to college. My primary goal is to foster unity and build a strong sense of community within our new district. Change can be daunting, but with the right leadership and tools, it presents a powerful opportunity for growth.

What are 2-3 issues important to dental students?

One of my primary goals for the upcoming year is to foster unity within the newly restructured districts. I want to incentivize students to engage in organized dentistry while creating opportunities for them to network with dental students from other states. For seasoned members, joining a new district with schools they haven't interacted with before may feel intimidating. For new members, balancing the adjustment to dental school while learning about ASDA can seem overwhelming.

These are understandable concerns, but I want to reframe this change as an opportunity for growth. Stepping outside our comfort zones allows us to embrace new learning experiences, and I hope to inspire students to feel excited about the year ahead.

Another significant issue is increasing opportunities for students to engage in advocacy. This year, I had the privilege of attending Lobby Day in Washington, D.C., an experience that showed me the profound impact dental students can have on the future of our profession. The lessons I learned there inspired me to create similar opportunities for others. Advocacy not only empowers students to make a difference but also equips them with leadership and communication skills that are valuable throughout their careers.

By focusing on unity and advocacy, I believe we can strengthen the community within our new districts and encourage more future dentists to engage with organized dentistry, leaving a lasting impact on the profession. These are two critical issues I hope to address if elected as District Trustee.