

## ***District 9***

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### **How do you work with or lead a team?**

My philosophy on leadership focuses on fostering collaboration and trust within the team. As part of the inaugural class of a new dental school, I've learned the importance of delegation and trusting those who wish to contribute. Delegation isn't about simply assigning tasks or giving orders, but about empowering others and trusting in their skills and abilities to reach our collective goals. To do this effectively, a leader must inspire others intrinsically, so they are motivated not just to accomplish tasks, but to take ownership and contribute meaningfully for themselves and those they serve. In addition, leadership is rooted in humility- acknowledging one's shortcomings, and encouraging open communication. The humility needed to seek advice, both within and outside of ASDA, is absolutely crucial for success as a leader. Humility as a leader also means being transparent and approachable, creating an environment where team members feel valued, open, and inspired to contribute toward our collective goals.

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

The most impactful leadership experience that has prepared me for the district trustee role is serving as chapter president for the inaugural chapter here at KCU. With the recent redistricting changes, it is essential- now more than ever, for the district trustee to be able to adapt to leading new schools, capable of pivoting, and finding a delicate balance between established foundation and inevitable change. My experience leading a new chapter, with entirely new experiences, required an indescribable amount of flexibility to find any sort of success. This role pushed me out of my comfort zone- whether attending conferences as the only attendee from our school, initial networking to build relationships with other chapters and vendors, or learning about ASDA from the ground up- these experiences have given me the opportunity to have a completely unique experience with this organization and have equipped me with the skills and perspective necessary to thrive as district trustee.

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

I have a very unique experience when it comes to my journey to dental school. Unfortunate life circumstances during my young adult life made it difficult to pursue any career, let alone dental school. It took me 7 years after graduating undergrad to finally get in. During those years, I felt deeply alone and unsupported. When I attended KCU, I made it a personal goal to ensure that not a single student in our class felt alone or unsupported in the way I felt during those years.

When I got involved with ASDA, I witnessed firsthand the dedication and efforts put into the organization by students- to accomplish the exact goal of what I wanted to do with our class. I saw the immense impact that strong leadership can have on every single student this organization serves. The district trustee role provides such a unique opportunity to continue these efforts on a much broader scale- to bridge the gap between chapters, offer support, and ensure that all voices are heard- especially in times of change within districts.

My goal in this position is to be a resource to the students I serve, to foster a sense of unity with the new schools in our district, and ensure a smooth transition as we navigate these changes. Ultimately, these efforts will shape an environment where every student within our district feels supported and inspired to continue to contribute to ASDA's mission.

### **What are 2-3 issues important to dental students?**

1. Health and wellness. Though this is a common, well-known issue- I feel this is a foundational aspect that can influence every single facet of a student's experience. I recently wrote a piece for Contour about how losing purpose in dentistry increases burnout within this field and how to redefine that purpose (which will be published in a few months). Essentially, I feel that we need to change our approaches to this ever-growing issue more proactively rather than offering band-aids. Creating a new culture that prioritizes health and wellness from the very beginning of dental education can help mitigate the effects of inevitable burnout before it takes root.

2. Navigating social media. Social media is unavoidable in modern life and can be the defining factor to which an individual can succeed in this field. It provides an invaluable opportunity to network with peers, mentors, and patients. However, growing concerns about pressure, image, personal privacy, and professionalism are emerging. As students, there is a growing pressure to cultivate the "perfect" internet persona even when an internet persona may not be necessary. Understanding how to navigate the use of social media as a helpful tool is imperative as a student or a dentist today. For those who may not be comfortable in an online world, providing alternatives for building a personal brand and networking is also important. The key is finding individualized balance and recognizing that success can be achieved with or without a social media presence.