

District 7

Anna Walker, Detroit Mercy 2026

How do you work with or lead a team?

As the current Detroit Mercy ASDA President, I have had the privilege of leading an amazing team. One of my goals as president was to facilitate a team in which every member had a key role to play. Our executive board is broken into eighteen distinct roles. Each person is responsible for planning initiatives/events that represent their committee. Once a month, we all meet for a board meeting and during these meetings everyone shares their ideas and we all pitch in to help each other execute the plans. I believe as a leader it is essential to make everyone on the team feel included. By doing so, we have been able to plan and execute multiple large scale events this past year.

Another key skill I have gained as ASDA president is the ability to delegate tasks. Before I became president, I was a "do it myself" kind of person. I now am able to delegate tasks amongst my team to help ensure that the load is distributed equally. I believe this is essential to a functional team because it helps ensure that no one becomes burnt out with their role. We all work together and support each other.

I feel my time as UDM ASDA President has shaped me into a well rounded leader and improved my ability to work with/lead a team.

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

As Detroit Mercy ASDA President, I have had many leadership experiences. I have represented UDM at multiple conferences this year including the National Leadership Conference and the District 6 Conference. I have also worked directly with the Michigan Dental Association this past year. I currently serve on their Access to Care board and have attended meetings as a student representative. Throughout the year I also collaborated with the MDA to plan numerous events for students such as lunch and learns and a Leadership Summit.

This past year I also served on the District 6 Conference Planning Committee. I worked alongside other members of District 6 and our trustee to plan and help execute our conference. During the conference I helped with introducing speakers and facilitated round table discussions about advocacy, wellness and DEI.

I believe my leadership experiences throughout my time in ASDA have equipped me for the District Trustee role. I am able to confidently work with a team, plan large scale events, remain organized and adapt to any challenges thrown my way.

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

I came into dental school with a completely different mindset than I have now. I originally planned to keep my head down, study and apply to orthodontic residency. Due to this, I felt very isolated the first couple months of dental school. I knew something had to change so when the application for the District 6 Conference came out I applied. I can't explain to anyone enough how much this one conference changed my life. I met my best friends, connected with multiple dental professionals and truly saw what the field of dentistry has to offer me. My passion for organized dentistry began my D1 year and has only continued to grow.

As District Trustee, I hope to provide an environment that fosters life long relationships, insight to what the world of dentistry has to offer and a continuous support system. As we transition from District 6 to District 7 I think it is more important than ever to hone in on community building right now. I hope to build a community in which our new district can flourish. I hope to make everyone in our district feel included and seen. I want to focus on the needs of each school respectively and bring everyone together to try and help each school where we can.

What are 2-3 issues important to dental students?

I attended Lobby Day for the first time in 2024. This was an eye opening experience for me because I had never experienced anything like this conference. I saw the impact that we as dental students are able to make. It was truly empowering to sit on Capital Hill and express our concerns with government officials.

One issue we spoke about at Lobby Day was the REDI Act. This enactment would allow students in residency programs to defer payment on their loans until the completion of their residency program. I personally chose to speak about the REDI Act with the representatives for Ohio (my home state). I hope to attend residency and so do many of my classmates. The REDI Act would alleviate financial stress on dental students because it would decrease the amount of interest building on our loans while we attend residency.

Another issue imposed on dental students is licensure reform. Other professions are able to go from state to state and work as long they have the appropriate licensure. My mom, for example, has her nursing license in Ohio and Michigan. I hope one day the dental profession will be able to do this as well. It would allow dental professionals to move locations more freely and increase patients access to care.