

## ***District 10***

***Annika Guenther, Louisiana State 2027***

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

I lead and work with a team by fostering an environment where every member feels heard and valued. I believe success is never an individual achievement but the result of collaboration. I prioritize clear and respectful communication, ensuring everyone's ideas are acknowledged, even in moments of disagreement. Further, I lead by example, ensuring my actions align with the expectations I set for my team. I would never ask someone to do something I wouldn't do myself, and I prioritize integrity and accountability in my leadership.

Adaptability is another key strength I bring to a team. Dental school has taught me to navigate unexpected changes and quickly create new plans, a skill I carry into leadership. I am also skilled at delegating tasks, aligning each team member's strengths with the goals at hand.

As someone with a vision for ASDA's growth, I strive to articulate my goals effectively and inspire others to contribute their unique perspectives. I show genuine appreciation for the contributions of every team member, recognizing that great teams are built not by titles but by the collective effort of individuals working together.

Ultimately, my leadership style is rooted in mutual respect, communication, and trust. I aim to inspire others to bring their best to the table, creating a collaborative space where ideas flourish, and success is celebrated as a collective achievement.

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

My leadership experiences have equipped me to serve as District Trustee by teaching me how to lead collaboratively, regardless of holding a formal title.

As our chapter's wellness chair, I have organized larger-scale events geared towards student success, led a committee, and enhanced my communication skills. Serving on our chapter's cabinet has also given me firsthand experience working with board members to execute initiatives that benefit our members.

Additionally, during my master's program, I served as a representative for my program. In this role, I managed a budget, advocated for students, and addressed their concerns—responsibilities that align closely with those of a trustee. This experience strengthened my ability to listen, prioritize, and act in the best interests of a larger group.

Finally, since my first day of dental school, I have been deeply involved with ASDA, contributing to various committees, including pre-dental, advocacy, and service. I have helped organize and execute events, actively participated in them, and grown a profound appreciation for each

committee's dedication to serving students and the community. This involvement has given me a holistic understanding of ASDA's mission and the impact it has on its members.

Through these roles, I've honed the skills necessary to lead with purpose, communicate effectively, and ensure that every voice is heard, which I am eager to bring to the District Trustee position.

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

I am interested in the District Trustee role because I am passionate about protecting the rights of dental students and advocating for their voices to be heard. As a first-generation dentist, entering dental school has been a dream come true—a dream I share with many of my peers. I want to protect and enhance that dream by serving as a conduit for the ideas, needs, and aspirations of ASDA members. Serving at a national level as District Trustee will allow me to amplify these efforts on a broader scale, ensuring that dental students from across the country have a platform to express their concerns and ideas. Further, I am passionate about building a strong bond between Louisiana and Texas as we unite under District 10, enhancing collaboration and shared goals to strengthen our collective voice within ASDA. At both the district and national level, I am committed to preserving the autonomy and power of dental students, ensuring they have a say in shaping their education and their profession.

In this role, I aim to integrate more professional development opportunities into district and national conferences, focusing on essential skills like business ownership and leadership. I also envision increasing service-oriented programming, such as education on treating patients from underserved communities that deserve more attention within dental training. Additionally, I hope to foster greater engagement with predental students, recognizing them as an untapped resource with fresh perspectives and technological insights because their involvement is essential for advancing our profession.

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

Dental students face numerous challenges during their journey, and as an ASDA leader, I am committed to addressing some of the most pressing issues to ensure their success and well-being.

One critical issue is preserving the integrity and autonomy of the dental profession. In a rapidly changing world, it is more important than ever to safeguard the power of dental students and future dentists to grow within their profession. This includes maintaining true ownership of practices and upholding the ethical standards that define dentistry. Protecting these foundations ensures that we continue to lead with integrity while adapting to advancements and challenges.

Another issue is the need for a strong support system. Moving out of state to attend dental school, I experienced the fear and uncertainty of starting fresh in a demanding environment. ASDA became my anchor, offering a community that transformed my experience. Many dental students across the country face similar struggles with stress, isolation, and pressure. By cultivating a supportive network through ASDA, we can create an environment where students feel connected, understood, and empowered to succeed.

Finally, financial challenges remain a significant burden for most dental students, who already grapple with substantial debt. To ensure equity and inclusiveness, I am committed to advocating financial accessibility, especially when it comes to opportunities like attending conferences. Every ASDA member should feel valued and supported, regardless of financial circumstances.

In summary, I hope to strengthen the foundation for all dental students, ensuring they are equipped to thrive both personally and professionally.