

District 5

Brooke Cary, Florida 2026

How do you work with or lead a team?

When leading a team, I prioritize trust, accountability, and development. In the early stages, I'm hands-on, leading by example and ensuring that I do not ask of others what I would not be willing to complete myself. I believe in setting clear expectations and structured deadlines, which I've refined through my leadership roles in ASDA and the military. Once roles are established and my team feels confident, I shift my focus to developing them into self-sufficient leaders. My leadership style is well-received by my current team because they know exactly what is expected of them, what duties/responsibilities fall under their titles, when tasks are due, and that I trust them to execute. I do know that leadership styles are not one-size fits all, and I constantly make adjustments to customize what each of my team members needs. My role then becomes that of a problem solver, a sounding board, and a source of support. I make it a point to attend as many events as I can—not to micromanage, but to show my unwavering commitment to both the organization and the team. I respect my team's autonomy and make an effort to not overstep, allowing them to take full ownership of their work. Ultimately, leadership isn't about control; it's about empowerment. My team knows they can count on me, whether they need a fresh perspective, a last-minute fix, or even an emergency response at 11:30 p.m. That balance of trust and support is what makes my teams successful.

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

My leadership experiences in ASDA and the Florida Army National Guard have uniquely prepared me for the ASDA District Trustee role. As Community Service Director and Chapter President, I've seen firsthand how information flows—or doesn't—between national leadership, chapters, and individual members. I understand where communication is effective and where it needs improvement, which is key to strengthening district-wide engagement. As Trustee, I would prioritize streamlined communication to each chapter through monthly meetings, and ask my committee members to do the same for their constituents. As Chapter President, I've built strong relationships with sponsors across the Southeast, negotiating and structuring partnerships that benefit both our members and industry partners. Under my leadership, our chapter—now a Gold Crown Award finalist—has prioritized professional development, including organizing our annual Business Symposium, securing speakers, and facilitating discussions on life after dental school. Additionally, as the Florida Dental Association Student Delegate, I've participated in the FDA House of Delegates, engaging in the legislative process to advocate for the future of our profession. Beyond ASDA, my role as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Florida Army National Guard has shaped my leadership under pressure. I've learned to adapt quickly, take on

responsibilities with little guidance, and prove my worth in rooms where I might initially be underestimated. I know how to command respect with grace, navigate difficult conversations, and ensure that every voice is heard at the table. These experiences have strengthened my ability to lead, communicate, and advocate—qualities that are essential for the ASDA District Trustee role.

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

Someone once told me, “ASDA is an organization of found leaders.” When I attended my first NLC, I thought ASDA was just a small group at my school that handed out toothbrushes and sponsored a trip to Chicago. But that conference opened my eyes to the world of organized dentistry. Before dental school, I worked for a dentist who wasn’t involved in their local FDA chapter. There wasn’t a pre-dental ASDA at my undergrad school. I was in the dark. At that same conference, the sitting ASDA president looked at me and said, “You’re going to make a great president one day.” That moment stuck with me. Since stepping into leadership, I’ve voted in the FDA House of Delegates, connected with student leaders across the country, and fought for every UF student to be auto-enrolled in ASDA to my own school’s Administration. I want to serve as District 5 Trustee because ASDA isn’t just an organization to me—it’s a community that shaped my dental journey. It serves as a vital entry point to organized dentistry, which is currently facing a growing membership crisis. No student should miss out on ASDA’s opportunities simply because they don’t know they exist or can’t afford membership. As Trustee, I will advocate for auto-enrollment across District 5, expand district-wide mentorship, and create more funding opportunities for professional development. ASDA is an organization of found leaders—but you can’t be found if you’re still in the dark.

What are 2-3 issues important to dental students?

Dental students today face several pressing challenges that impact their education, financial future, and career choices. One major concern is the rising interest rates on federal student loans, including Grad PLUS loans. With no cap or regulation to control these increases, students who rely on federal aid are facing an uncertain financial future. As graduation approaches, the burden of high-interest debt makes loan repayment even more daunting. For third- and fourth-year students, clinical training limitations are another critical issue. With a shrinking patient pool, increasing patient restrictions, and fewer full-time faculty members, students are struggling to meet graduation requirements. The recent CODA accreditation cycle has only added to this stress by raising educational standards and program costs. While students are expected to meet higher clinical and academic demands, patient accessibility and affordability remain unchanged, making it even harder to complete requirements. Finally, many dental students feel discouraged or financially unprepared to pursue practice ownership after

graduation. While DSOs offer stability, the increasing number of contracts being signed has sparked debate within the profession. While veteran dentists warn against this trend, the alternative—taking on more debt to open a private practice—feels risky in a world where dental insurance reimbursement rates are shrinking, and patients are prioritizing basic necessities over dental care. These challenges highlight the need for stronger financial protections, better clinical training opportunities, and sustainable career pathways for future dentists.