

District 3

Minhee Jeon, Pennsylvania 2026

How do you work with or lead a team?

Leading or working in a team is rooted in the ability to recognize each member's strengths and weaknesses, piecing them together with the glue of a shared vision to create a unified mosaic that can illuminate the unique traits of each heterogeneous component. Just as every single piece of the art, no matter how big or small, plays an important role in completing the masterpiece, I strive to empower every member in his or her journey of discovering their talents and creatively complementing them in a unified way. In order to do so, I believe in fostering an inclusive support system for both mental and professional growth, while also developing positive relationships to understand their needs and backgrounds. I understand that in order to be a supportive backbone for my teammates, first and foremost, I need to do my own part to bring success and not hinder the team's progress. Thus, I am very committed to my own responsibilities, completing my tasks in a timely manner, communicating my progress to my team to make sure everyone is on the same page, and responding to emails as quickly as possible. I am also very quick to learn and open to taking on additional tasks to apply my experiences in a different context, actively seeking to challenge myself and apply any feedback from others to expand upon my skills for what my future may hold. To me, every experience as a leader or a member is an opportunity to learn and inspire.

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

My leadership journey with ASDA—at the local, district, and national levels—has provided me with invaluable experiences beyond the traditional dental school curriculum. Through my local chapter involvement as advocacy committee associate, I was able to host events that allowed me to engage directly with students. This helped me learn to identify their needs and cater events that fostered their curiosity about policies that affect our dental profession. This was the beginning of my fueled passion for equipping students with the resources to become active members, and in turn future leaders in dentistry.

At the district level, I have held roles as the Facilities Chair and Director of Meetings to prepare for the District 3 Annual Meeting, bringing together over 240 dental students from five different dental schools. With every monthly meetings and writing agendas, my skills in effective communication, delegation, and strategic organization became more refined. More importantly, working alongside students from various backgrounds has taught me the value of teamwork, adaptability in the face of unexpected challenges, and the importance of proactive leadership. I also gained a deeper understanding in financial management through securing sponsorships, which is critical in hosting a successful event at a large- scale. I also helped guide my team in the

recruitment process of speakers to ensure that the contents are relevant to students' interests. These experiences have not only strengthened my leadership skills, but also my commitment in fostering connections and meaningful relationships with students from schools near and far.

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

Before starting dental school, I had very little understanding of what ASDA represented or the impact of organized dentistry. My ASDA journey began when I joined the advocacy committee as an associate member. Over time, I learned that the organization would not only give me a platform to understand the power of my voice as a dental student but also support me to advocate for meaningful change within our profession, which is something that I never had fathomed was possible in just a traditional dental setting. Additionally, I had realized that ASDA provided me with a supportive community that empathizes with the challenges we face while celebrating our successes together. As the contributing editor for Contour, I was able to create such community by amplifying diverse voices, sharing stories, and creating content that connected dental students nationwide. This role deepened my passion for fostering inclusivity and inspiring others to advocate for positive change within dentistry, which led me to pursue a role as the Trustee for my district.

As District 3 Trustee, my priority is to enhance chapter engagement and development, especially with the newly districted community. I aim to ensure equal representation from all schools, fostering leadership potential in every student. To better understand the unique needs of our District, I plan on visiting each school and connecting with chapter leaders and members. I hope to empower each schools to become a leader by creating an environment where ideas can be channeled and freely shared in open discussion.

What are 2-3 issues important to dental students?

One of the most common issues facing dental students today is the rising cost of dental education, which inevitably leads to a substantial student debt. This financial burden has both present and future consequences that actively shape their career decisions: many dental students feel discouraged from pursuing further specialty education or working in underserved communities. ASDA alongside the ADA have advocated for polices that address loan forgiveness such as the REDI Act, which alleviates the challenges by allowing residents to defer student loan payments without accruing interest while also encouraging dental students' aspirations. ASDA gives the opportunity for students to engage in these issues directly through National Lobby Day, where students can tell their stores for legislative change.

Another issue is the persistent barrier to access dental care, leading to compromised oral health in many communities across the nation. Barriers such as financial constraints, geographic

disparities, and limited public health resources, leave certain populations more vulnerable than others. However, when students come together with shared mindset to health equity, I believe that we can contribute to the change for our patients and become one step closer to achieving an equitable healthcare system. Last year, I was able to voice my perspective for the Action for Dental Health Act of 2023, which advocated for the support of workforce training in oral health programs to deliver care where access to care is most needed and strengthening of safety net to bring dental health education to the community.