

## ***District 4***

### ***Raven King, Virginia 2027***

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

To me, leadership is about understanding that no task is too big or too small. In every leadership role I've taken, I've first served in other positions within the team—whether on an executive board or committee—allowing me to understand the full scope of the team's responsibilities. My professional journey has been similar; I've worked as a front desk receptionist and dental assistant before becoming a dental student, which gives me a deep appreciation for all roles within a dental team.

I believe empathy is the most valuable trait in a leader. Understanding the challenges each team member faces and offering support where needed is essential. A leader should actively seek ways to help and engage directly in the process to ensure the team's success. My success is tied to the success of the team I lead, which is why I am always willing to pitch in, whether as an active member or the president of an organization.

I also believe that listening is more important than speaking. By actively listening to my team, I foster trust and open communication, strengthening both our relationships and the organization. This helps ensure full support in achieving our shared team goals.

As a future dentist, I recognize that leadership is inherent in the role. Our communities look to us as trusted professionals, and our dental teams depend on us to ensure that the workday runs smoothly and that patients receive the best care. Being dependable and supportive is key to maintaining that trust.

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

Throughout my education, I have gained extensive leadership experience that has prepared me for the District Trustee role. As President of the Pre-Dental Student Association ('20-'21) and Alpha Epsilon Delta Chapter ('21-'22) at the College of Charleston, I learned how to lead a team, delegate tasks, and manage challenges—skills I honed during the adversity of the COVID-19 pandemic.

My ASDA leadership journey began with various roles as a pre-dental, starting as a member of the Pre-Dental Board for ASDA District 4 ('21-'22), where I contributed to both the Liaisons and Communications Committee. I also served on the Pre-Dental Board for ASDA District 1 ('22-'23). These early experiences ignited my passion for ASDA and inspired me to pursue further leadership opportunities at the district level.

As a dental student, I've taken on several leadership roles that have deepened my commitment to service and collaboration. I am currently a Mission Of Mercy (MOM) Coordinator for VCU School of Dentistry, where I help organize and participate in MOM events. These experiences have taught me the importance of leading with empathy and purpose, particularly when serving underprivileged communities.

Additionally, I serve as the ASDA Representative for my class. In ASDA District 4, I've held roles as Content Creator ('23-'24) and now as Chief of Staff ('24-'25). In this capacity, I work closely with District 4 Trustee Allison Tempel, organizing and leading monthly cabinet and Board of Directors meetings. These diverse experiences have equipped me with the skills and vision to serve effectively as District Trustee.

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

I am deeply interested in the District Trustee role because of my leadership experiences and the mentorship I've received from previous District 4 Trustees, including Allison Tempel, Natalie Benkandil, and Jenna Chun. Allison, in particular, has been a guiding force in my growth, allowing me to shadow her as Chief of Staff and recommending me as Delegate Reviewer. Her support has given me the confidence to pursue this position.

As Trustee, I hope to strengthen student advocacy and encourage students to remain engaged in their professional development long after graduation. With the growing threats to issues like fluoridated water and vaccinations, it's crucial that we have strong representation in these discussions. In a quote I heard recently from a panel on advocacy—"If you don't have a seat at the table, you're probably on the menu." I strongly believe in advocacy's power and the importance of giving students a voice.

Additionally, I aim to increase involvement in organized dentistry across District 4. I also intend to provide support in any way I can to the newly created districts following the recent redistricting, as well as assist our Tennessee chapters in their transition from District 4 to District 6. My goal is to empower our chapters to stay involved with ASDA, keeping student voices at the forefront of decisions that impact their education and profession.

Having spent years deeply committed to ASDA, I am proud to take on this role and ready to lead with dedication and purpose.

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

Two major issues currently affecting dental students are student loan debt and the evolving demands of dental practice. Rising tuition and living expenses make it nearly impossible for students to graduate without significant debt. This financial burden can influence career

choices, particularly in underserved areas where salaries may not be competitive enough to support loan repayment. As a result, many new graduates are drawn to Dental Service Organizations (DSOs), which offer higher salaries compared to smaller private practices. While DSOs are a valid career path, as someone who dreams of owning my own practice, I'm concerned that the weight of student debt is pushing many graduates away from entrepreneurship and into corporate dentistry.

Another growing challenge is that dental schools struggle to keep up with the rapid advances in the field. New technologies like implant dentistry and digital innovations are becoming integral to general practice, but dental schools can't always integrate these developments quickly enough into their curricula. As a result, many graduates feel unprepared for these new treatments and opt for additional training through General Practice Residencies (GPR) or Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) programs. These supplemental programs are essential for building proficiency in emerging areas, but it highlights a gap in dental education. To better equip students for modern practice, dental schools must incorporate cutting-edge techniques and technology into their programs, ensuring that graduates are ready to meet the demands of the profession.