

District 12

Kuan-Chen (Shannon) Wu, Pacific 2026

How do you work with or lead a team?

When leading or working with a team, my primary focus is on fostering transparency and inclusivity. I believe that decision-making processes impact everyone, so I prioritize being open about the behind-the-scenes rationale, ensuring that team members are informed and feel connected to the bigger picture. I value the opinions of others and actively seek ideas and feedback from teammates, as this collaborative approach often leads to the best course of action. Another principle I uphold is leading by example. Team dynamics are heavily influenced by energy and attitude, so I strive to demonstrate enthusiasm and passion in my work. A lack of interest can cause others to feel their contributions are unimportant, so I make a conscious effort to encourage participation, uplift morale, and emphasize the value of everyone's role in achieving team success. Additionally, I believe in finding a healthy balance between professionalism and friendliness, particularly when working with peers. It's important to recognize that we are all equals, and my role is to assist and support my teammates in reaching their goals, not to impose authority. This balance fosters mutual respect and a productive, positive work environment. Ultimately, I strive to be an adaptable leader that can improve myself through feedback and adjust my action plans according to the different personalities I am working with.

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

Since beginning dental school last year, I have embraced numerous leadership opportunities that have allowed me to grow both personally and professionally. I have been particularly active in the American Student Dental Association (ASDA), serving as the Legislative Liaison Lead last year and currently as the Chapter President. These roles have provided me with a deep understanding of ASDA's operations and the opportunity to lead our chapter on a local level. As President, I assist our board members with their tasks, act as the primary communicator between our members and the school, and guide our chapter's overall direction. I have also taken charge of organizing student participation in conferences, including managing flight schedules, securing absence excuses from school, and ensuring the safety and engagement of attendees. Additionally, I serve as the Patient Safety Committee Representative for my class, where I attend meetings to address clinic issues, propose improvements, and relay updates to my classmates. Furthermore, as a Student Ambassador, I work closely with the admissions department to support the interview process for prospective students. Through these experiences, I have collaborated with countless students and faculty, refining my leadership skills. I am confident that these experiences have prepared me to take on larger-scale

responsibilities and to share my passion for ASDA with an even broader audience beyond my local chapter.

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

I am pursuing the District Trustee role because of the profound impact ASDA has had on my journey and how much I have enjoyed contributing to its mission. My connection with ASDA began in my undergraduate years, attending pre-dental days and benefiting from the wealth of resources ASDA provided about dental school. As a dental student, my eagerness to be a part of ASDA grew, and serving as the Pacific Chapter President has only strengthened my passion. This role has shown me how my efforts can positively influence others—whether it's enhancing the dental school experience with engaging events, advocating for student rights through lobbying, or offering additional educational opportunities beyond the curriculum. Seeing the tangible impact of these initiatives inspires me to contribute on a larger scale. As a District Trustee, I hope to extend these efforts to a wider audience and provide meaningful experiences to even more dental students. Additionally, with our school being redistricted, I aim to bridge the gap between schools in our previous and new districts, fostering collaboration and ensuring strong connections despite geographical differences. Ultimately, I want to work closely with all chapter presidents, supporting their needs, helping them achieve their goals, and serving as an approachable and reliable resource at the district level.

What are 2-3 issues important to dental students?

There are countless issues that are important to address and advocate for on behalf of dental students, but three key areas are student debt and repayment programs, mental health and wellness, and professional networking. Dental school is undeniably rigorous, with each program presenting unique challenges. Amid the demands of excelling academically and clinically, it's easy for students to neglect their mental and physical health. This is why initiatives like ASDA's wellness committee are so vital, offering students much-needed reminders and resources to prioritize self-care. Another significant concern is the growing burden of student debt, as tuition costs continue to rise, placing immense financial stress on students. ASDA's advocacy efforts at the legislative level, combined with providing students with better education and resources on repayment options, are essential to alleviating this pressure. Additionally, professional networking is a critical aspect of dental education. While dentistry may seem solitary to some, it is truly a collaborative field filled with opportunities for mentorship and connection. ASDA serves as an invaluable platform, enabling students to network with professionals and peers across the globe, fostering collaboration and sharing ideas. While ASDA cannot solve every challenge faced by dental students, its initiatives provide meaningful steps toward addressing these key issues.