

District 11

Summer Furrer, Utah 2026

How do you work with or lead a team?

The hallmark of a great leader is their ability to delegate effectively and trust their team. Reflecting on past experiences where I've felt unheard or unvalued in a team, I've learned how important it is for everyone to feel heard and trusted. These experiences shaped my leadership philosophy. My top priority is ensuring everyone has a voice. When people feel their contributions matter, the team's results are astonishing. A great example is how we transformed our chapter's Fever Week.

During D1 year, I remembered seeing some D4s sitting in our classroom and thinking, "Huh, that's weird," only later to find out that was ASDA Fever Week. It wasn't exciting or engaging. This past year, I asked my cabinet what they envisioned for Fever Week. Their ideas were incredible, and together, we created a dynamic lineup of events, including a pickleball tournament, an advocacy presentation, a yoga session, a workshop on recognizing unconscious bias, a member appreciation breakfast, and a loupes fair. We also added a "What is ASDA?" session.

The results were transformative—attendance skyrocketed, and I haven't heard any D1 ask, "What even is ASDA?" This success came from trusting my team to bring their ideas to life while staying engaged and ensuring the process was organized and on track. I know the team's successes and failures ultimately reflect on me. I stay meticulously organized to best support my team and hold regular check-ins to ensure accountability. In doing so, we accomplish and exceed our goals.

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

When I started as chapter president-elect, I was immediately faced with significant challenges. Previous leaders had left little documentation, leaving me without access to critical information such as funding sources, budgets, event planning processes, or key contacts. It would have been easy to feel overwhelmed and let this disorganization persist for the next leader. Instead, I saw an opportunity to improve the system for future leaders.

I leaned on my support network, including my chapter cabinet and our district trustee, to determine the next steps. Through countless emails, meetings, and recovering forgotten usernames and passwords, we rebuilt the chapter's foundation. We now have everything securely stored in one location, a budget created and approved by our school administration, and a comprehensive plan for the year's events. This experience taught me the importance of

reaching out for help, collaborating effectively, and ensuring the longevity of a role through proper organization and documentation.

Additionally, as the current chief of staff for my ASDA district, I've worked closely with membership chairs, DEI chairs, and conference planning teams while also serving as a note-taker during district presidential council meetings. These experiences have allowed me to learn from our current trustee and gain a deeper understanding of planning conferences, leading a district cabinet, and coordinating multiple chapters across states.

These leadership experiences and knowing that I will never truly be on my own have equipped me with the skills and perspective necessary to serve as an effective and impactful District Trustee.

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

Dental school is stressful. It's easy to get caught in a rut with classes, managing patients, clinic demands, and looming student loans, and soon, you start to wonder why you're even trying to be a dentist. ASDA has been that ladder out of the rut for me.

When school feels isolating, or clinic becomes overwhelming, I turn to my ASDA community. Whether it's a quick text from a friend in Arizona or an upcoming conference to look forward to, ASDA always reignites my passion. Beyond providing a sense of belonging, ASDA offers perspective.

Attending events like Lobby Day and Annual Session and engaging in advocacy have fueled my passion for our profession. ASDA has excited me about "politics"—something I never thought I'd say. It reminds me why I chose dentistry and inspires me to make a difference.

So that's why I stay in ASDA, but why do I want to be a trustee? Because I want to share this passion. I want to help students find the same sense of community, purpose, and excitement I've discovered through ASDA. While the redistricting initially felt unsettling, I now see it as an opportunity to foster unity in our new district.

Ultimately, as trustee, I want to act as a megaphone: amplify our members' voices. Whether that be through hosting workshops, webinars, conferences, or visiting chapters, I aim to make our member's ideas a reality. I want to expand ASDA's reach and impact, inspiring our current members and future dental students.

What are 2-3 issues important to dental students?

Student Debt and Financial Literacy: You can't discuss dental student issues without loans. I would aim to have more district-wide webinars or workshops on financial literacy with financial

advisors or recent graduates who can share practical advice. In addition, I would want to continue sharing how ASDA and the ADA are advocating for support on policies that would alleviate some of our financial burdens.

Mental Health and Well-being: ASDA has been my "ladder out of the rut" during tough times in school. I would make it my priority to ensure members feel the same sense of community I've found through opportunities to increase the ability of members not in leadership positions to voice concerns or ideas, install peer mentorship programs, and/or collaborate with mental health professionals to host webinars to equip us with tools to cope with stress.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: We all want to have a space and feel included. Being a student in Utah, where the state just passed an anti-DEI law, I've seen the devastating mental effects that occur when we lack supportive pathways. I'd like to see more district-wide initiatives, such as cultural competency workshops and collaborations with organizations supporting underrepresented students. As this year's D10 chief of staff, I helped organize the first-ever D10 DEI certificate, featuring impactful webinars on topics like Domestic Violence Awareness and Access to Care for Veterans. The heartfelt feedback we received underscored the importance of fostering understanding and care for diverse populations.