

Errin DePalma, DDS
General Member Board Position
November 2019

AACD APPLICATION QUESTIONS

a). *Why are you applying for this position?*

Since joining the AACD as a general member in 2016, I have been introduced to the potential I personally have as a dentist. I have been practicing in private practice since 2003 and over the years I have gravitated towards more cosmetic procedures in my office. I have always enjoyed the power a beautiful and functional smile can give a person and change them for the positive. I actually never realized how much I needed to grow as a cosmetic dentist until coming to my first annual meeting in 2017 in Las Vegas. Then in 2018 at the annual meeting in Chicago, I attended my first board meeting and was intrigued with the behind the scenes of the Academy as well as how welcoming and helpful all the members were to me. I decided at that meeting that I was going to start working towards accreditation. I have felt such guidance and a sense of belonging from the AACD that I wish to become even more involved and give back all that I can to the Academy. I am hoping this position will allow me to provide all my knowledge and experience as dentist to help grow and expand the AACD as it has helped me grow immensely in just a couple years.

b). *Have you served on boards in the past?*

I have not served on any boards in the past.

c). *Leadership skills and organizational style*

My leadership skills have certainly evolved over the years, and probably has balanced the leadership technique that my husband exudes in our office as well as in our family. I tend to be a very controlled and “lets think things through” type of person. I want to understand all aspects as well as the pros and cons of the situation before making any decisions. I do find change challenging but I am willing to do so as long as I have the full understand of the direction and outcome desired. I will work tirelessly towards a goal and encourage those around me to stay positive and hold them accountable when needed. I find that positive attitudes really do reflect in everything you do and accomplish. With a negative mindset, it puts everyone at a disadvantage. I tend to lead with a positive attitude but when discipline or criticism is needed, I like to ask how we could have changed or improved the situation versus just reprimand. I do like to be upfront and open with my team member so everyone is fully aware of what is expected and we plan out our office schedule 12 months in advance including days off and goals. Being organized to me is being open and fully communicating with your team. If everyone is aware of all aspects and goals, reaching them is possible.

d). *Accomplishments and approach to fulfilling obligations*

I have to say I am quite the type A personality, but I would venture to guess that most dentists probably are. I have always been driven in my goals especially when it comes to business and my profession. I knew I wanted to be a dentist since the age of 13. Although I had no dentists in my family, it was just something that I thought of and decided to pursue. So here I am 30 years later, as a general dentist. I believe current accomplishments would be in my continuing education to better myself and my dentistry. I have attended many Spear lectures and workshops in Arizona for several years. Recently, since attending the AACD meeting I was introduced to Kois courses. My first course was in the Fall of 2018. I was immediately hooked. I am set to graduate from the Kois curriculum this May of 2020. I was determined to complete them as quickly as I could because I found it to be so valuable in my improving my skills and my daily professional life. I plan on continuing after the Kois graduation to work toward a mentorship there as well. The AACD is another example of recent accomplishments. I decided at the 2018 annual meeting in Chicago that I wanted to learn as much as I could to improve my dentistry in cosmetics and that I wanted to work towards accreditation. I immediately began studying for the exam and took it in December of 2018 at a testing center in my home town. I didn't want to wait for the next annual meeting to take it! I did the required lectures online and then began my cases for submission, of which I have passed 4 cases already this year. I believe I am very driven on my goals, especially at this point in my life and career. If I believe it is something I want to do and is worth my time and effort, there is no reason to wait or stall on it, I want to accomplish and complete it as soon as possible in order to advance my skills and knowledge as quickly as I can.

e). *Balance those friendships when policy or ethical issues create a conflict*

Although I have only been in the AACD for a couple years, I have been quite active and involved in the Academy by attending all the board meetings which has allowed me to meet many new colleges who have become friends. I understand how friendship can make certain things difficult within business and within the AACD Board. however, I don't believe it should play a role at all when it concerns to ethical issues. As dentists we must uphold our ethical obligations on a daily basis to not only our patients but to our team members. It should be no different within the AACD Board. The same goes for the policy of the AACD. The policy has been created for a reason and is set to protect the Academy and it's members and it's credentialing

f). *What do you bring to this position that is unique or distinctive? How will you make a difference?*

I believe I can bring a unique perspective to this position of the general member on the board. I have been in practice as a general dentist for over 16 years now. This gives me a lot of real world experience of success as well as failures. I understand how much dentistry has evolved even since I've been out of dental school, as well as how much the practice of dentistry has changed. I am aware of the challenges we face as

dentists with regards to insurance, corporate dentistry, quality team members, customer service and quality materials and work. I myself have evolved as a dentist which I believe is common. I have grown in not only my skills but my empathy and understanding for patients and their desires for achieving dental health. I come from a place of experience as a dentist that I believe can show other general dentists that you can continue to evolve and grow and not just remain stagnant in your practice. The excitement that comes from being a new dentist is wonderful, and I feel the AACD can capture that excitement and be appealing for new dentists to join and get involved with. However, I feel like the seasoned dentists are the ones the AACD should actually be targeting for membership. These dentists that have been in practice for 10+ years are the ones that can bring the most to the Academy. They not only have the dental real world experience but they have the resources to advance their education and skills. I believe I am a true example of this and can help show others that you can continue to grow as a dentist.

g). *Where do you see your interests and expertise supporting the advancement of the AACD Strategic plan and reflecting an alignment with the Academy's core purpose?*

As a non accredited member I feel like I have a different perspective to share with the other general dentists and members. I have expertise as a small business owner as well as an employee. I see how one can grow professionally and personally as a general member of the AACD. I believe the standard the AACD has set in cosmetics is one that needs to be upheld and understood by the members not as a frustrating far-reaching title but one that should be encouraged and fostered. I believe using social media is absolutely necessary to retain and engage younger dentists and I think the AACD can continue to grow their social media to attract new members.

h). *How do you see yourself relating to the membership and forming a bridge between the Board and our members?*

I believe I would have an interesting role as the general member on the board. I appreciate what the AACD can bring to the general dentist that is passionate about their profession. I feel that the Academy has something to offer for all dentists in all stages of their career from aiding them in their accreditation journey with mentorship and online courses; to many hands on courses for those who don't plan on accreditation but just want to better their skills as a cosmetic dentist. I hope to be able to learn more within the Board and help grow the AACD.

i). *List any leadership courses or webinars taken.*

Being a co-owner of a dental practice along with my husband, we have grown as leaders for our team. It has always amazed me that dental school prepares you for your technical skills as a dentist but does little to nothing in training you to be a leader and boss of a small business. Over the years working alongside my husband as a boss to our team, we have recognized our leadership skills have needed guidance and support. We hired the Levin Group in 2010 to help our business as well as to guide us and train

us as a business owner/manager. Then in 2017 we have been working with Blatchford solutions as a business consultant. Although these are dental consultants they do help train us in our leadership abilities such as communication techniques, personality types, management skills as well as conflict resolutions and accountability. I am also an avid reader and enjoy reading many business and leadership type books. Some of my favorite books include *Start With Why* by Simon Sinek, *The Checklist Manifesto* by Atul Gawande, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie, *The Leader Who Had No Title* by Robin Sharma, and *Integrity Selling for the 21st Century* by Ron Willingham.

j). *What else should we know in order to consider you as an applicant for this position?*

Although I have been practicing dentistry in private practice for over 16 years, it has only been recently since I have felt re-energized as a dentist. I think it's important to show dentists, of all ages and experience, that dentistry doesn't have to plateau in your life. The way continuing education has changed since I completed dental school is exciting yet frightening. I know a lot of young dentists choose to "learn" on youtube and online courses versus attending dental meetings. I think the trend in learning and growing in our profession seems to be either 'youtube' based or curriculum type courses such as Kois, Spear, Engle, Dawson and such. Overall, the attendance of large dental meetings such as Hinman and the Greater NY meeting seem to be in decline. We need to take note as an Academy where the trends of education are going. I was one that always attended the big ADA and Hinman meetings but I always left feeling uninspired. Only through the AACD and Kois have I felt re-energized and excited about dentistry and what is possible. I hope to be able to inspire other general dentists in the AACD.

k). *Has any dental licensing board taken adverse action against your license or is there any action pending?*

No

l). *Have you ever been convicted of a felony or are there any charges pending or under investigation?*

No