

5.a Why are you applying for this position?

I am applying for the University Representative position to the Board of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry because the past 31 years of membership has greatly impacted my visual, diagnostic, and technical skills in providing esthetic dentistry. I currently serve on the Editorial Board and as a Journal reviewer, but I believe serving in this new capacity would further support the AACD and be personally rewarding and fulfilling for me.

I have served on the Educators Forum (previously the University Relations Committee) since joining the Dental College of Georgia and attend as many meetings as I possibly can. As the Director of Dental Continuing Education at the Dental College of Georgia, unfortunately some of our programs overlap with the AACD annual meeting. I have participated as faculty in our Dental Esthetics course provided to our third-year dental students and served many years as the director of our senior presentations course in which students have to present (as one of their cases) an esthetic case in which I selected the criteria for treatment based on the AACD accreditation case types. In this capacity, I am one of a select few faculty members that students seek out for advice and assistance in treatment planning and delivery of care and served on our College Esthetics Team (previously headed by Dr. Gerry Chiche).

Given my experience in private practice and now in academics for the past 14 years, I believe I bring experience that would be beneficial as the university representative to the Board. Having served as a member of the Educators Forum for many years now has been extremely beneficial and a valuable experience. In return, it would be my goal to help shape the future of the AACD and make membership as rewarding for new members as it has been for me.

5.b Have you served on boards in the past? If so, what have you learned from this experience?

It has been my privilege to have served on other boards during my career, and I continue to serve on several Dental Editorial Boards and as liaison to the Board for the Georgia Academy of General Dentistry. Participating as a board member is truly an eye-opening experience as to all that goes on behind the scenes to make an organization functional, profitable (if it is a for profit organization), and fulfill the goals and mission of the organization. Serving as a board member in many cases does require a significant time commitment and dedication to the tasks required. I have learned that you cannot have members on a board who are just in it for recognition and not willing to be an active participant. Serving in this capacity requires a great deal of effort and one must be committed to helping the organization succeed and be active in planning, execution, and assessment. I have also learned that in many cases, not all board members are going to agree on a particular issue but that the good of the organization and its members is paramount beyond the feelings or beliefs of any one individual. Therefore, it is a team effort to reach agreements that will ultimately be best for all involved. I have learned that the best way to make a positive impact is become involved. Too many people just sit back and let everyone else do the work. A successful organization is, in great part, due to the action and involvement of its members. It is part of the board's responsibility to motivate and support its members in carrying out the mission of the organization. Lastly, board members must be proactive and creative to keep the organization moving forward into the future. We must be forward thinking with ideas and strategies to meet the needs and goals of the future and ensure long term success of the AACD.

5.c We are interested in learning about your leadership skills and organizational style. Tell us what we could expect and how you work with others. Be specific as possible.

I believe leadership begins with having a clear vision of the mission and goals of the organization and working with team members to develop the path to reach these goals. A leader must be people oriented, work well with others, and empower them to be creative, innovative, and strive for exceptionalism. Too many leaders micromanage their team, but this is not my philosophy. I believe in shared goals, equipping others team members and persons in leadership positions with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed, then encouraging them give it their best. Will they fail or be discouraged at times? Yes, but so do we all. As a leader, it is one's job to uplift and provide encouragement and support as needed to get back on track. We should lead by example and earn the trust of those who serve with us. Leadership is not about being the best. Leadership is about making everyone else better, and that is truly the philosophy to which I aspire.

Many people participate in leadership programs and exercises, but in the end, do not become good leaders. Delegation, encouragement, and support are at the front and center of being an effective leader. One must develop a strong team with a shared vision and goals for the success of the organization. Often, people don't take chances for fear of failure. It has been said that FEAR has two meanings: Forget Everything And Run, or Face Everything And Rise. In order to move forward, leaders must step out of their comfort zone and take risks in order to grow and reach new heights.

As leaders, we must also reach out via grass root efforts to encourage membership and participation. Nothing can replace the relationships and mentorships developed as a result of participating in quality organizations. As membership and participation continue to dwindle in many organizations and at major meetings, we must take an active role now to look at creative ways to encourage and foster continued growth and participation, especially among the younger graduates. The AACD has a great vision and has made enormous strides forward in recent years. Effective leadership is the goal to continuing on this path, and it would be an honor to serve on the Board to help shape the future of this organization.

5.d Serving the AACD requires people to take on projects and see them to completion, often working with others to accomplish specific goals. Tell us about your accomplishments and approach to fulfilling obligations.

In academics, there are numerous projects that must be completed not only individually, but from a group effort as well. Having served on numerous committees and heading up multiple projects, the task can be quite daunting but one that has to be completed. I will briefly discuss just a couple examples to illustrate specific accomplishments. Not only am I a full-time faculty member at the Dental College of Georgia, but I also treat private patients within our Faculty Dental Practice and serve as the CE Director for our college. In this CE Director role, I am constantly working to organize events, procure speakers and work out the many details that go with that. In this capacity, I work with our CE team to pull the events together which is truly a team effort. Additionally, I have served as the Director or Co-Director of specific CE courses offered each year. As an academic institution and to maintain accreditation in various organizations (Example: Accreditation in Southern Colleges and Schools, SACS), I have served on more than one occasion as Chair or Co-Chair heading up committees needed to provide critical information and documentation to satisfy evidence of compliance. These are no small tasks and require months of preparation and working within a team to meet these goals and deadlines. Additionally, outside of my institution, I have served in leadership roles that also require coordination and participation with others to complete the necessary tasks at hand.

In order to complete many of the more complex tasks and projects, it is imperative to set goals/timelines, develop the right team, and have a clear vision of what is expected and needed to get the job done. It takes dedication and determination to accomplish such important tasks and I believe I have the drive and persistence to be successful in leading the AACD into the future.

5.e The AACD offers our members a superb opportunity to form friendships which could be brought into conflict when policy decisions or approaches must be addressed. Tell us about how you might balance those friendships when policy or ethical issues create such a conflict.

As it has been said, “The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry” (quote from Robert Burns) is a factual observation and has tarnished many relationships for one reason or another. When it comes to organizations, policies and rules must be developed and followed for the greater good of the organization and of its membership. Fortunately, most conflicts that arise are as a result of a particular member not agreeing with a certain policy and can be resolved rather easily, either the member resigns or brings about a petition to change the rule. It is rare that policy or procedure results in an ethical dilemma although it can happen. Friendships can be disrupted for example if members in policy making or enforcement positions have differing opinions on how a rule or policy should be interpreted or enforced as compared to a general member. In some cases, policies (or rules) can and should be amended to fit the situation. It has also been said that rules often get in the way of trying to do the right thing. It is my opinion that policies are intended to serve the greater good. However, when differences occur that could potentially divide an organization or alienate a segment from it, it is important to carefully look to see if the particular policy in question can be amended (or updated) to meet the needs of the current situation. As an example, if an organization states in its Bylaws that members must attend two out of the last three annual sessions to maintain membership but a member has missed the last two meetings, should their membership be terminated (ie, lose a friend)? Every situation must be looked at individually as often times there are extenuating circumstances and perhaps the member has made up for missing the annual meeting in other ways. Another example that occasionally occurs is when a dentist who is sought out for a second opinion strongly believes the patient was over diagnosed by a colleagues or friend (perhaps a member of the AACD) for greater profit when the patient’s needs or desires could have been satisfied with perhaps more conservative and less treatment. It would be my goal (as a board member) to reach out to the member (with the patient’s consent) to perhaps see if a mutual agreement on treatment could be reached to where the patient was satisfied to return to the first dentist of choice. It has never been my intent to inform a patient the previous dentist was wrong or offering bad treatment advice or that they should report it immediately to the Dental Board. It has always been my policy to attempt to help find a suitable solution between the dentist and patient and to never try to use the opportunity to take advantage of the situation to gain a new patient.

While one must look at each situation independently, my approach would be to look at all alternatives (unless a situation demands immediate termination such as physical abuse for instance) to see if there is a reasonable solution that would be acceptable to both parties. If a mutually agreeable solution cannot be reached, at least the effort was made which would hopefully result in an amenable split. Conflicts in most circumstances can often be resolved, but when that is not possible, the board policy should be upheld.

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

Why Me? This is the type of question that truly makes me reflect on why I should be considered among other qualified applicants. I believe my experience and membership in the AACD over many years is a testament to my dedication to the values and mission of the organization. I joined the AACD over 30 years ago when I was in private practice as I saw the value of being a member in that it made me a better dentist. Having been in private practice for nearly 20 years gives me insight into what general dentists want and need in terms of education and support in the field of esthetic dentistry. Currently, I am now in my 14th year of full-time academics and a big part of my teaching efforts has been focused on teaching cosmetic techniques and materials to our students, encouraging them to strive for excellence and continue to seek out quality education post-graduation from organizations such as the AACD. As the Director of Dental Continuing Education for our Dental College, I also understand the needs and gaps in education that exists. I have also had the privilege to serve as our College representative to the University Educator's Forum since 2006 and now to the University Relations Committee. In fact, I was the first liaison from our College to the AACD. I have been very active in our esthetics curriculum and am also the Director of our Senior Presentations. In that role, I have required that the esthetics case should follow the same criteria as that of AACD accreditation.

I believe I bring diversity in terms of experience that would be beneficial to the board. I relate well to my peers, as well as to the younger generation of practitioners, given that I teach them every day. The younger dentists are indeed our future and I truly enjoy working with them and watching them become motivated with regards to esthetic dentistry and the many benefits it offers patients. I encourage them to become involved with organized dentistry with the AACD being one of my top recommendations. I also work with the AACD in bringing in speakers from outside our college to talk about esthetic dentistry and how they incorporate it in their practice. Dr. Hugh Flax volunteers in our senior clinic and has been very instrumental in working with us in this regard. I am very active in esthetic education as well as encouraging the future generation to become involved early on in quality organizations to continue their post-graduate education and be an active part of organized dentistry.

5.g Please give us an idea of where 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 stated earlier, I am very involved in our college with the esthetic education curriculum for our students. Being involved on a daily basis to assist students in the diagnosis and treatment of esthetic cases provides me the opportunity to share skills with them which have been accrued over the past 30 years, and much of it from my membership in the AACD. I also assist students with case selection, research to support their treatment decisions, and the development of their senior case presentations. Serving in this capacity affords me the opportunity to communicate with students the benefits of AACD membership and encourage those who express interest in continuing their knowledge in this field to join and become active members of the organization. I also see my role as continuing to be active in the University Relations committee and assisting our efforts to continually improve our esthetic curriculums within our respective colleges and encourage colleges that are not members to join and strengthen our efforts. We also want to encourage students, residents, and junior faculty to participate in case submissions for

competition and be recognized for their efforts (and developing skills) as well as those of the supporting faculty.

Having served in numerous positions within national committees, as well as those within my college and university, has provided me with many opportunities to work with teams to accomplish goals and objectives. Having served as chair or director has also sharpened my skills and abilities as a leader in the various organizations and to gain national recognition as such. It would be my goal as a member of the AACD Board to use my experience to benefit the organization and advance its strategic goals and support the overall mission of the academy.

5.h Ultimately, the purpose of serving the AACD is to support our membership. Tell us how you see yourself relating to the membership and forming a bridge between the board and our members?

The best way to relate to the membership of any organization is by being a member yourself. Having been a member of the AACD for over 30 years, I understand the needs of the membership and believe this puts me in a good position to assist in developing strong ties between the membership and the board. As the Director of Dental Continuing Education for our college, I am constantly communicating with participants to encourage feedback and find gaps in knowledge, and seeking out opportunities to incorporate new and innovative programs to meet the needs and desires of our participant base. As a board member, I would seek to do the same and give it the due diligence it deserves. I would take this commitment seriously and strive to work with membership services and program planning to serve the need and desires of the membership. I would encourage and work with the board to send out surveys, perhaps every two to three years, to ask the membership how we are doing and what we could be doing better, and ask for suggestions for future programs/topics. I would recommend we develop focus groups to solicit similar information and divide the groups into number of years in practice, etc. The membership is the lifeblood of the organization and we need to be in close communication with them seeking their feedback and acting upon it. By doing so, we show that we are listening and truly interested in what the members have to say. We also need to work with new graduates (less than 5 years for instance) to see what, if anything, we can be doing better to assist them in their new career. We could consider pairing new members (for those who are interested) with mentors to assist them in their development and growth. As stated previously, membership and attendance in professional organizations and annual meetings is dwindling and thus we need to be proactive in our approach and outreach to our membership. We must think creatively (outside the box) as to how we can improve what the academy has to offer and how we offer it. Reaching out to the membership on a regular basis (at least annually) to solicit feedback is critical in keeping the academy vital and reactive to the needs of today and tomorrow. As this is part of my responsibilities in my current job at the Dental College of Georgia, I believe my experience would be extremely valuable.

5.i Please list any leadership courses or webinars taken. Leadership training is highly recommended.

Dentsply Sirona Academic Leadership Conference October, 2019
Governor's Teaching Fellows Symposium May, 2009
Academy of General Dentistry Leadership Conference November, 2008

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

In addition to being a member of the AACD for over 30 years and serving on the University Relations Committee since 2006, I also am a member of the Journal of Cosmetic Dentistry Editorial Board and a manuscript reviewer. I was chosen as the representative from our college several years ago to provide an article in the first academic issue of the Journal of Cosmetic Dentistry, Fall 2014. I co-authored the article titled "A Blended, Novel Team Approach in Academic Esthetic Dentistry" and was also asked to write an introductory article I titled "An Innovative Interdisciplinary Teaching Environment".

As the university representative, I have continued to work with the AACD to help sponsor programs such as the University Outreach Program for our students. Developing and implementing programs such as this not only provides wider exposure to the students on esthetic topics but also allows them to interact with members of the academy and learn more about what the academy has to offer. I am proud to be part of this worthwhile mission arm of the AACD, and if chosen as a board member I would work to develop additional programs to reach out to other groups in a similar fashion as part of the strategic goal of providing education outside of the scientific session.

In summary, I believe I have the dedication, determination, experience, enthusiasm, and leadership skills that would be beneficial to the AACD Board and to the membership at large. It would be my pleasure and honor to serve in this capacity.

5.k Has any dental licensing board taken adverse action against your license or is there any action pending? If yes, please explain.

I have held licenses in the state of South Carolina (still active), North Carolina (voluntarily dropped as no longer practicing there), and a teaching license in the state of Georgia (still active).

I have never had any complaints files against me nor any actions taken for any reason. My licenses in South Carolina and Georgia are in good standing.

5.l Have you ever been convicted of a felony or are there any charges pending or under investigation? If yes, please explain.

I have never been arrested nor convicted of any felonies. There are no charges pending.