

John F. Weston, DDS, FAACD

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

I am applying for the position of ABCD board member because I feel I have a set of skills that allow me to continue to contribute to the AACD's mission in a significant way. As an Accredited Fellow and over 23 years as an active AACD member, I feel I have a good understanding of where the Academy has been and where it is heading.

During these uncertain times of COVID-19 pandemic, I feel the AACD needs experienced sound leaders that will guide the AACD properly. I specifically feel a calling to the credentialing side of the Academy due to my personal experience and the impact the Academy and its credentialing process has had on my life and my practice. I want to make sure all members and non-members know about the credential and the incredible value it can bring to them personally and professionally.

As a board member, you have the opportunity to directly affect the way the credential is managed, marketed, and presented to the members and public. Our credential is really what defines our academy and makes it unique compared to other organizations. I feel it is crucial that we have a well-managed and structured system that allows members to easily enter in the credentialing process. Once started, we need to continue to make sure they have all the mentoring and educational tools necessary to be successful in their journey.

Over the past 30 years, a significant amount of the work has been completed and I feel we are riding on the shoulders of many committed members who established the credential many years ago. My goal is to help guide the future of the Academy so we can not only attract new members but maintain our current members. To accomplish this, we need a board that has a balance of experience, talents and years as a member in the academy. I feel I can add historical perspective as well as add experience from an educational/mentoring perspective.

**b. What is my vision for the future of the AACD**

It's difficult to pinpoint exactly what the future of the AACD will look like as many of the traditional roles the AACD has played have changed dramatically. Take our annual meeting for instance, we were always noted for having great social energy, excitement and always the highest quality education. Now as we downsize our meeting and try to make financial sense of how we go forward, much of what made our meetings great is gone. I don't think the annual meetings will be a driving force for our academy in the future.

What I do see is the AACD being the leader and educational source to support a true cosmetic dentistry specialty. The AACD should strive to become the primary source for others to educate and earning specialty status for our profession. This is the most exciting thing on the horizon for the AACD and we are well suited to be a primary part of the initiative for many years to come.

**c. Have you served on other boards and what have you learned from this experience?**

During my 21 years as an Academy Member, I have served 2 terms (4 years) on the BOD, and 2 terms on the ABCD. I was also on the PEC for 6 years and chaired 2 Annual Scientific Sessions, Nashville and Atlanta.

These positions have allowed me to be present at many board meetings and strategic planning sessions while serving on multiple committees. What I have learned from these positions is that it's important to have a balanced mix of leadership and worker mentality within the membership of these boards and committees. Having too many unexperienced leaders in a group can be detrimental. I have also witnessed how politics and personal bias can sometimes get in the way of progress. I feel it's important to be impartial and understanding, realizing that you may not always get your way because there may be a "better way".

I feel like boards can sometimes get stuck in the details, which I often witnessed while serving on boards in the AACD. The boards need to be constantly reminded to stay focused on their ultimate strategic goals and use the home office staff and committees to handle the details of projects.

#### **d. My leadership**

My leadership style is focused on problem solving and getting results. I like to simplify them into smaller projects that are easier to grasp and measure. Sometimes less is better. I will often listen to everyone's comments and not participate in the general conversation and then offer a summary comment that tries to simplify the issue at hand. You could probably call my leadership style as more of a facilitator. I feel I work well with others because I believe there is always room for far others to contribute to a subject. I never feel like I am the smartest one in the room because there is always someone with more ideas.

#### **e. Accomplishments**

Personally, over the last 28 years, I built up and managed a large multi-specialty practice in La Jolla CA, that has grown 4X in revenues during my tenure. I have enjoyed the challenges of managing a large team of doctors and auxiliaries and always felt challenged and invigorated as I was forced to multi-task on a daily basis. I recently sold the business to my very qualified partner and have since taken on the role of mentor and employee. This has allowed more time to pursue other business ideas and offer myself for volunteer positions in organizations like the AACD.

During my years on the BOD, I was tasked with starting our first on-line educational platform. I worked with a small committee, appointed by the president and we were able to deliver the AACD's first web based video learning platform by forming a partnership with HDIQ Dental. That has since developed into a robust and valuable asset for the members AACD Central where we own develop and manage the content.

Over 10 years ago during my time on the PEC, we were struggling with the organization of the educational sessions at the meetings. The feedback was all pointing to a system that could help attendees figure out the best courses to attend at the annual meeting. Our idea was to group courses by type and have a series of road maps for courses that had similar content and learning objectives. As a result, we were the first to develop and implement the educational "Track" learning system that is still used today in our programming.

Currently, I am a fellowship examiner, accreditation examiner, mentor for accreditation and fellowship and recently have been chosen as preceptor for the AACD residency program.

**f. Conflicts**

Over the many years of being involved with active leadership in the AACD, I have never felt like my decision to vote for or against an issue was ever influenced by a friendship. I also do not feel that I have lost gained friends based on my support for or against any particular subject. I make it a point to speak, act and vote my conscious and what I feel is right and best for the Academy and will always encourage others to do the same. I have no corporate or financial conflicts that would keep me from being a fair participating board member. I have a strong dislike for typical politics and as a result try to avoid the actions and atmosphere at all cost.

**g. what can I bring?**

As an active Accreditation and fellowship examiner and mentor, I have the unique opportunity to interact with members working towards earning their credential. They often share candid information with me about what is working for them and what is not with regards to how the AACD administers it's credential. I feel this can be very helpful when the board is discussing making changes that deal directly with the credentialing process.

I also teach continuing education courses that cater to the 5 AACD case types and have been a featured speaker for the last 13 AACD annual sessions. (Minus this year due to COVID) As a result of these activities and experiences, the decisions I make come from an educator/mentor's view point. Like other accredited members, I know what it takes to achieve accreditation and fellowship and understand the challenges they have before them. I feel I am uniquely prepared to serve on the ABCD as a result of my experience and continued belief that the AACD credentialing process has a great value proposition for our members.

**h. alignment with strategic plan**

As an AACD educator, mentor and examiner I am fully engaged in the Academy's goal to continue to grow and be largest and most comprehensive source for quality cosmetic dental education in the world.

As a clinician, I practice minimally invasive dentistry every day for my patients. It's easy for me to adopt the AACD's position of creating beautiful smiles while preserving the structure and function of the patient's original dentition.

I believe the message the academy brings to the profession is not just a "best practices" concept, but a message that can bring incredible value to any dentist who decides to become involved with the AACD. I enjoy writing and to date have published over 25 peer reviewed cosmetic dental articles, eight of which have been featured in the JCD. Most of the articles I have written have been centered around "accreditation level" dentistry. I truly feel the foundation of the AACD is the credential process. Supporting the credential is where my primary interest lies and this has also become the focus of my everyday clinical practice, my lecture courses and a majority of the articles I write.

### **i. Membership**

I think one of the biggest challenges for the AACD with regards to membership is keeping younger new members engaged to the point where they renew their membership and pursue accreditation. The challenges for associations like the AACD are the many on line and more convenient sources available for continuing education. The younger generations are also more mobile friendly and more accustomed to engaging via text email and social media as opposed to in person. They may not feel the same attraction to the annual meeting compared to more seasoned members from previous generations. We need to be able to recognize these trends and offer enough excitement and value that we stay competitive in today's dental education market without sacrificing our mission. I think we have to listen carefully to the members react swiftly and make changes that will benefit everyone. The annual session is one area that needs to completely "re-tooled" to make it more efficient, productive and not just socially but educationally as well. I have always been able to speak with and engage the new members through my hands-on courses and credential "case type" lectures. A lot of younger and newer members attend these courses and my personal mission is to keep it simple and fun. I feel it's all about being approachable whether it's something as simple as starting a conversation in the elevator or attending the new member luncheons.

### **j. Growing membership**

I feel the AACD is at a unique spot where we need to decide what kind of academy we want to be, a large mainstream academy with 7-10 k members with large annual meetings or a smaller more defined group that has smaller more intimate meetings. For our general members, we should focus on creating as much value as possible in cosmetic dental education. Whether it be in person or virtual, education is the key. If we are the "go-to" place for cosmetic dental education we will be successful in maintaining and growing general members. Then we have to provide something for our more experienced members as well, that may be something like a smaller more intimate meeting with select speakers etc. It's really two groups we are working for. Then if we achieve our goal of making Cosmetic Dentistry a true specialty, the AACD is poised to be the source for gaining that specialty and we should be working towards that as well.

### **k. Leadership courses**

I have completed the entire Dale Carnegie course as well as multiple leadership training courses at dental meetings over the years. I have also been involved with leadership at the AACD since 2000 and fortunate enough to learn from seasoned leaders of many different styles. I've been able to see first-hand what styles of leadership work best and are most effective in stimulating conversation and input from those around them. However, the best leadership training has come via running my own practice. Thru trial and error, I feel I have been able to hone my leadership skills to a unique level that puts me at an advantage over others.

### **l. Nothing more to add**

**m. No actions have ever been made against my license**

**n. No convictions or charges pending**

