

2025 AACD Board of Directors Nominee Application Materials

[Vice President: Laura Justice, DMD, FAACD](#)

[Accredited Member Seat: Saiesha Mistry, BDS, Msc, AAACD](#)

[Accredited Member Seat: Camille Zelen, DDS, AAACD](#)

[Laboratory Member Seat: Steve Hoofard, CDT, FAACD](#)

[General Member Seat: Noemi Cruz-Orcutt, DDS](#)

Laura Justice, DMD, FAACD

AACD Member Since
1989

What position are you applying for?

Vice President – Board of Directors

Are you an Accredited Member?

Yes

Provide your condensed bio in one paragraph

Dr. Laura Justice graduated with honors from the University of KY Dental School and has been in practice since 1989. She previously owned 5 dental practices in and around Lexington, Ky and continues to enjoy practicing dentistry in Lexington as well as in Atlanta with the Atlanta Center of Cosmetic Dentistry. Dr. Justice has always enjoyed mentoring dentists and has mentored many associate dentists in her practices as well as throughout the US. She is an accredited fellow of the AACD and currently serves as chairman of the ABCD. Laura also serves as an accreditation examiner. She is also a member of ADA, KDA, BGDS, AGD, AACA, LEAD Mastermind Group and numerous study clubs. Laura is passionate about her children, grandchildren and her dental comfort dog GiGi.

List your education

Transylvania University

University of Kentucky College of Dentistry

List your employment history

Private practice solo ownership from 1989-1994

Private practice partnership from 1995-2024

1099 Dentist for Private practice 2024-

List current or previous volunteer leadership positions (committees/boards) you've held within the AACD

Chairman- Marketing Committee

Chairman New Members Relation Committee

Accreditation Examiner

ABCD for four years and currently chairman

Describe any leadership experience you've had within your community or other dental organizations

Served on the Board of the Miss Kentucky Pageant

Served on the Kentucky Board of Dentistry

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

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Yes, I have been on several boards including the Kentucky Board of Dentistry. The biggest lessons I learned was diplomacy, confidentiality and to listen. It was an important part of fairness to each member of the board. I also found it paramount to respect other members opinions regardless if they were the same as mine, and that these opinions together always concluded with the best solutions.

Why are you applying for this position?

I am applying for this position because I am passionate about this organization. I want to continue to see the positive direction that we are currently seeing and it is vitally important for the future of the academy that we have leadership who understands where we have been, but also understands the new direction that we need to continue to sustain the academy. I believe that I understand this based upon my past and current leadership and I have the time and desire to do the necessary work to keep this academy alive and well!

What is your vision for the future of the AACD?

I believe the future of the AACD should always involve the importance of credentialing because it is what makes the academy unique, relevant and vital. I believe we are moving in the right direction to help increase members going through accreditation with various programs like DOJO and we should continue to be creative in this fashion. I also believe the future has to involve strategic partnerships with others and possibly other dental organizations like we are currently doing with Seattle Study Club. We thrive when we partner with those who believe in esthetic dentistry, and those who are at the top of the field of dentistry in general as part of our educational curriculum. The academy should continue to pursue newer graduate and young dentists who are participating in esthetic or comprehensive dental continuing education and encourage them to seek accreditation. I am convinced that the academy has to continue to be more creative about the AACD brand awareness in general and I do know that we are working hard now on those initiatives and these should continue.

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

I have led committees and various organizations, and most importantly my team on a day to day basis at my practice and I believe that my leadership style is an adaptive or situational one. I think it is important to always know "your players" or who you are leading. I believe that the AACD needs this type of leadership because we have a lot of strength (other leaders) in our membership and it would be difficult to lead with other styles. We need to be able to adapt strategies to the changing dynamics and have the emotional intelligence to recognize our organizations needs, and the ability to act on these needs, and listen well. The leadership will require putting differences aside and working closely together to keep the academy thriving.

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.

Once I have been given a project, I typically gather information concerning the details and goals of the project and then work hard to get it completed. I usually like timelines or deadlines, as I find that helps you in getting the work done. I have implemented many projects within the practices I have owned, one specific example recently is creating and accomplishing a digital workflow between all 6 offices. I have accomplished most of my major goals in life by being single minded about completion.

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.

I would hope that whoever is holding a position on any board would understand that as adults we may have different opinions on what should and should not be done and various ways in which we would accomplish things, but I would hope that we would all conclude that we want what is best for the academy and its membership. I would take personal effort to always follow up with a friend who I may have had a conflict with just to let them know that I value them and their opinion even if it is different than my own.

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

Certainly, one aspect that may make me unique and distinctive, is my time in the academy. I bring a historical perspective that is a value, especially because I do not believe we need to be the same type of academy that we were, but that we need to remain or gain relevance by looking backward at what was great but moving forward with fresh and unique ways to become "the academy". I am a critical thinker who loves working with others to solve problems. I like to be creative and think outside the box, I believe we need fresh ideas and new ideas to help grow the academy back to high value/active members and I believe we need to make the credential more desirable for younger dentists to want to achieve it. I will make a difference by continuing to serve as a dedicated leader of the academy and continuing to support the credential and programs designed to grow it, and by also mentoring and encouraging others toward leadership.

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.

I am of the opinion that our current leadership is excellent and the directions we are taking to stimulate membership will hopefully show growth. Because accreditation is part of the turnaround plan and we need to make it known through marketing and social media that this is the only organization in the world that recognizes achievement in cosmetic dentistry. I think we want to create and massage more "value" members....One's who are actively participating in programs like DOJO, ESS and other online programs and hopefully these members will promote and help create more interest from dentists in being members of the academy and more willingness to do accreditation.

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.

I believe the relationship to the membership is very important or the academy does not exist. I think that we could do a better job in asking our members to be more involved which could help form a bridge between the Board and the members. I also believe that we as Board members need to do a lot of positive talk and outreach to members asking for what they want to see happen. We as board members need to be very careful not to speak about anything that could be construed as issues so that the general overall vibe of the academy is that it is the best organization to join and create a feeling of FOMO to those dentists who aren't members, especially in a current climate of less involvement in organized dentistry from younger dentists who want to feel inspired in order to join an organization.

What unique ideas do you have to build and grow our membership?

I would like to get more creative with social media to shed light on the academy and what we offer including the credential. Again, I think creating the concept of scarcity or FOMO works to make dentists feel like they are missing out on something and that it may be hard to get in almost makes people want to be part of it more.

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

Paul Homoly Leadership and Public Speaking Courses

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

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I am ready, willing and able to spend the time and energy and to do the hard work or make hard decisions to guarantee the future of our academy.

Saiesha Mistry, BDS, Msc, AAACD

AACD Member Since

2012

What position are you applying for?

Accredited Member - Board of Directors

Are you an Accredited Member?

Yes

Provide your condensed bio in one paragraph

I am Dr. Saiesha K. Mistry, BDS, MSc, AAACD, an Aesthetic and Restorative Dentist based in Mumbai, India, with over three decades of experience. As an Accredited Member of the AACD and the current President of the Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry India (ACDI), I have been dedicated to advancing the field of cosmetic dentistry in India and building meaningful connections within the global dental community.

I run a high-end practice specializing in smile makeovers and full-mouth reconstructions, integrating cutting-edge technology with personalized care. Passionate about education, I serve as faculty gIDE, USA, and on the Board of Management at Ajeenkya DY Patil University.

List your education

BDS Bombay University - 1991

MSc Conservative Dentistry - Eastman Dental Hospital, London, UK - 1994

International Certification Diploma in Advanced Aesthetics from New York University in 2003

Kois Graduate = 2024

List your employment history

I started my practise in 1995 and have worked along with my father and brother since then.

List current or previous volunteer leadership positions (committees/boards) you've held within the AACD

- Member at Large, American Board of Cosmetic and Esthetic Dentistry, 2022 - 2024
- Membership Committee, American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, 2018 - 2023
- Member, Distance Learning Committee (DLC) American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, 2022 - present
- Co-Chair Distance Learning Ad Hoc Committee, American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, 2020 - 2022
- Members Relations Committee, 2020 - 2022
- Membership Chair in Training, Membership Committee, American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, 2019 - 2020
- Chair, Corporate, Affiliate, and International Relations Committee, American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, 2019 - 2020
- Corporate, affiliate, and international relations committee, American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, 2018 - 2019
- Contributor, Journal of Cosmetic Dentistry, 2012

Describe any leadership experience you've had within your community or other dental organizations

I serve On the Board of Management of the Dr Ajeenkya DY Patil University, Pune: 2015 - present

I am the current President of the Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry India.

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

Yes, I currently serve as the President of the Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry India (ACDI) and as a member of the Board of Management at Ajeenkya DY Patil University, Pune. These roles have taught me the importance of strategic leadership, collaboration, and effective communication to achieve organizational goals

Why are you applying for this position?

I am applying for this role because I am deeply passionate about advancing the field of cosmetic dentistry and contributing to the continued success of the AACD. Having benefited immensely from the Academy's resources, education, and global network, I see this as an opportunity to give back and help shape its future.

What is your vision for the future of the AACD?

My vision for the future of the AACD is to build on its reputation as the global leader in cosmetic dentistry by embracing innovation, inclusivity, and collaboration.

I see the AACD expanding its influence not only in education and accreditation but also in fostering a worldwide community that sets the standard for excellence in aesthetic dentistry.

I believe the AACD can play a vital role in mentoring and supporting the next generation of dentists while fostering greater diversity within its community.

By broadening its global outreach and strengthening its support for international members, the AACD can become a truly universal platform for education, innovation, and excellence in cosmetic dentistry.

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

As a leader I prioritize a collaborative, transparent, and inclusive approach. I believe in empowering teams by valuing diverse perspectives and fostering open communication. I focus on building strong, trust-based relationships with colleagues, creating an environment where everyone feels valued and motivated to contribute their best. I encourage accountability and believe in providing support and guidance when needed, while also giving autonomy to allow individuals to grow and take ownership of their roles.

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.

Through my experience, I have learned how to balance diverse perspectives, foster teamwork, and make decisions that align with both the mission and long-term vision of the organization.

As a member of the AACD New Member Committee, I reached out to new members, ensuring they were informed about the full range of benefits and encouraging them to engage actively with the Academy. This role strengthened my ability to build connections and foster a sense of community among members.

On the Distance Learning Committee, I contributed to planning and reviewing new lecture recordings for the portal, ensuring that AACD education upheld the Academy's core values and maintained its high standards. Additionally, I am actively involved in the Aesthetic Study Club, where I have given a presentation to members, further promoting collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the AACD.

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.

Balancing friendships with professional responsibilities requires transparency, integrity, and open communication.

When policy or ethical conflicts arise, I focus on addressing the issue, not personal relationships, making decisions based on evidence, best practices, and the organization's goals.

While disagreements are natural, I believe in handling them respectfully and constructively.

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By maintaining mutual respect and clear boundaries, I ensure that decisions serve the AACD's mission while preserving positive relationships. Ultimately, I prioritize ethical integrity and professional dialogue to resolve conflicts effectively.

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

With my diverse experience in clinical practice, education, and leadership—both as the President of the Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry India (ACDI) and as an Accredited Member of the AACD—I believe I can bring a unique, global perspective to the Board.

I am committed to fostering innovation, collaboration, and inclusivity, and I aspire to help expand the Academy's reach and impact worldwide.

This role would allow me to contribute my expertise, energy, and dedication to advancing the AACD's mission while continuing to grow as a professional and leader

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.

My core values in dentistry align with the Academy's core purpose of advancing the art and science of cosmetic dentistry through education, accreditation, and innovation.

I am passionate about integrating new technologies into clinical practice and education, which aligns with the AACD's focus on innovation.

Additionally, my commitment to mentoring and fostering diversity can support the Academy's efforts to nurture the next generation of cosmetic dentists.

I believe my work in global education, mentorship, and evidence-based practices will further strengthen the AACD's mission to elevate the standards of cosmetic dentistry worldwide.

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.

I see myself as a strong bridge between the AACD Board and its members by fostering open communication, transparency, and a shared vision.

As a practicing dentist and educator with experience leading both national and international dental communities, I understand the challenges and needs of members at all levels. My approach would involve actively listening to their concerns, gathering feedback, and ensuring their voices are heard within Board discussions.

My time on the AACD New Member Committee gave me valuable insight into the needs and aspirations of members. Engaging directly with new members to ensure they were aware of AACD benefits and encouraging them to participate actively taught me the importance of making every member feel valued and connected.

What unique ideas do you have to build and grow our membership?

With my unique position of being an International member, I feel that growing the AACD brands membership and awareness internationally, particularly in my region, is an opportunity to make the academy truly inclusive.

Using a focused strategy of bringing high-quality, AACD-branded education to underserved areas. by hosting regional workshops, seminars, and masterclasses that highlight the Academy's standards of excellence in cosmetic dentistry. By offering accessible, world-class educational content locally, we can elevate the profile of the AACD and attract new members who seek to align themselves with the Academy's reputation for quality and innovation.

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

AACD Webinars – Various webinars on leadership in cosmetic dentistry, including topics on team building and organizational management.

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I am currently part of Gold Collar, a specialized leadership and management course for dentists. This program is designed to enhance the leadership and business skills of dental professionals, focusing on areas such as team management, strategic decision-making, and running a successful practice

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

I bring a strong commitment to the AACD's mission, with proven leadership in both national and international settings. My experience in fostering education, mentoring, and creating inclusive communities positions me to bridge the gap between the Board and global members.

As a practicing dentist and educator, I offer a balanced perspective that aligns with the AACD's goals, and I am eager to contribute my energy and vision to help expand the Academy's influence and impact worldwide.

Camille Zelen, DDS, AAACD

AACD Member Since
2009

What position are you applying for?
Accredited Member - Board of Directors

Are you an Accredited Member?

Yes

Provide your condensed bio in one paragraph

Dr. Camille Zelen owns a practice in Duluth, MN. She currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Cosmetics Dentistry. She is also a member of the AGD, AACD and the AAFE and has published in the Journal of Cosmetic Dentistry. Her practice focuses on wellness, airway management, laser therapy and facial esthetics. Her airway education journey starts with The Breathe Institute, Tongue-Tied Academy and ASAP (Airway, Sleep And Pediatric Pathway). Now as an accredited member of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, she can deliver amazing smiles in combination with optimal wellness.

List your education
Creighton Dental School 2008

List your employment history
Val VAerde Dental, Omaha NE associate dentist 2008-2009
Gallery Dental, Duluth MN associate dentist 2009-2013
Mount Royal Dental, Owner dentist 2013-present
Synergy Aesthetics, Owner, Med Spa, 2023-present

List current or previous volunteer leadership positions (committees/boards) you've held within the AACD
Current accredited member of the BOD
ESSC coach 2024

Describe any leadership experience you've had within your community or other dental organizations
Past board member North East District Dental Society
Past committee member of the Kitchi Gammi Club, Duluth MN

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Past board member of the Lake Superior Swim Club

Past committee member of Northern Lights Foundation, Duluth MN

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

As a past board member, I have learned the importance of collaboration, active listening, and balancing diverse perspectives to make informed decisions that align with the organization's mission. Serving on various boards has also reinforced the value of strategic thinking, transparency, and effective communication in fostering trust and achieving collective goals.

Why are you applying for this position?

I want to serve on the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry to support and contribute to the exciting growth happening with initiatives like the Esthetic Skills Study Club and the Dental Dojo. I am passionate about helping the AACD evolve and continue to lead in cosmetic dentistry by providing value beyond accreditation, ensuring the organization remains a dynamic resource and community for its members.

What is your vision for the future of the AACD?

My vision for the future of the AACD is to solidify its position as the standard for excellence in cosmetic dentistry, setting benchmarks for quality, education, and patient care. I also aspire to see the AACD play a pivotal role in advancing cosmetic dentistry toward becoming a recognized board specialty within the field of dentistry, further elevating its credibility and significance in the profession.

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

My leadership style is collaborative and goal-oriented. I believe in fostering open communication, encouraging input from team members, and creating an environment where everyone feels valued and heard. I prioritize organization by setting clear objectives, establishing timelines, and delegating tasks effectively to ensure projects stay on track.

You can expect me to approach challenges with a positive attitude and a solution-focused mindset. I excel at building strong relationships, both as a mentor and a peer, and I value teamwork as the foundation of success. I'm proactive in addressing issues and ensuring that decisions align with the overall mission and goals. My experience as a business owner and mentor has honed my ability to manage multiple priorities and work collaboratively with diverse groups to achieve results.

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.

As a practice owner for over ten years, I have developed a strong ability to take on projects and see them through to completion. I currently lead a team of 25 employees, including two dentists, and recently expanded my business by opening a med spa that employs a nurse injector and an esthetician. This growth required careful planning, collaboration, and commitment to achieving specific goals.

This year, I also had the honor of presenting a lecture for the AACD's Esthetic Skills Study Club, which showcased my dedication to sharing knowledge and contributing to the professional development of others. My approach to fulfilling obligations involves clear communication, setting achievable milestones, and ensuring accountability within the team. I prioritize staying organized and focused while fostering a collaborative environment to successfully achieve objectives.

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.

I value the strong friendships formed through the AACD but understand that the organization's mission and ethical standards must always come first. When conflicts arise between personal relationships and policy or ethical issues, I believe in approaching the situation with professionalism, transparency, and integrity.

I would focus on open communication, ensuring that all decisions are guided by the best interests of the AACD and its members. By separating personal feelings from professional responsibilities, I aim to address conflicts respectfully while maintaining trust and fairness in the decision-making process. Balancing these dynamics requires a clear commitment to upholding the Academy's values above all else.

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

What sets me apart is my commitment to staying at the forefront of dentistry through active participation in continuing education and staying informed about current trends. I have a unique ability to balance embracing innovative technologies with respecting traditional, research-based practices, ensuring a comprehensive approach to patient care. Additionally, as both a dental practice and med spa owner, I bring a distinctive perspective on the relationship between cosmetic dentistry and facial aesthetics. I can help the AACD further explore and emphasize the synergy between these fields, enhancing the value we provide to members and patients alike. My blend of clinical expertise, business leadership, and forward-thinking mindset positions me to make a meaningful difference in this role.

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.

What sets me apart is my commitment to staying at the forefront of dentistry through active participation in continuing education and staying informed about current trends. I have a unique ability to balance embracing innovative technologies with respecting traditional, research-based practices, ensuring a comprehensive approach to patient care.

Additionally, as both a dental practice and med spa owner, I bring a distinctive perspective on the relationship between cosmetic dentistry and facial aesthetics. I can help the AACD further explore and emphasize the synergy between these fields, enhancing the value we provide to members and patients alike. My blend of clinical expertise, business leadership, and forward-thinking mindset positions me to make a meaningful difference in this role.

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.

Serving the AACD membership is a responsibility I take deeply to heart, and I see myself as a bridge that fosters connection, support, and growth within the organization. My active participation in the AACD's annual Scientific Session underscores this commitment. Each year, I make a concerted effort to connect with new members in attendance, welcoming them into the fold and helping them feel supported as they embark on their journey within the AACD.

As a coach with the Esthetics Skills Study Club, I've had the privilege of mentoring many new members. This role has allowed me to guide others as they refine their clinical skills and develop a deeper understanding of the accreditation process. Mentorship is a value I carry into my own practice as well, where I am actively encouraging two young associates to pursue accreditation with the AACD. By sharing my experiences and championing their efforts, I aim to foster a new generation of AACD professionals committed to excellence in esthetic dentistry.

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Through these efforts, I strive to strengthen the relationship between the Board and our membership by being an accessible resource, an advocate for their needs, and a conduit for their voices within the AACD. My approach is to cultivate a culture of inclusivity, growth, and collaboration that helps our members thrive and feel empowered to reach their fullest potential.

What unique ideas do you have to build and grow our membership?

To build and grow our membership, I believe we must focus on providing value beyond the accreditation process, recognizing that our members have diverse professional goals and interests. One unique idea is to enhance the annual Scientific Session by introducing specialized tracks tailored to different areas of interest and professional growth. These tracks could include:

Facial Aesthetics: Expanding beyond dentistry to incorporate the growing demand for facial esthetics, equipping members with advanced skills in treatments like injectables and facial analysis.

Airway-Focused Dentistry: Addressing the intersection of esthetic and functional dentistry by offering a dedicated track that delves into airway health, sleep-disordered breathing, and their relationship to esthetic outcomes.

Leadership Development: Preparing upcoming members to take on active roles within the AACD as educators, Board members, or committee leaders. This track could include workshops on public speaking, leadership strategies, and effective mentorship.

These tailored tracks would not only attract new members by showcasing the AACD's commitment to evolving with the field but also deepen engagement among existing members by addressing their broader professional aspirations.

Additionally, we could explore the development of year-round value propositions such as:

Regional hands-on workshops to bring specialized training closer to members.

An online mentorship platform connecting members with experts in specific areas of interest.

Member spotlights and success stories shared through AACD communications to celebrate achievements and inspire others.

By broadening our scope and providing value in these ways, we can make membership in the AACD more inclusive, relevant, and appealing to a wider audience, fostering both growth and deeper connections within the community.

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

I have not had extensive formal leadership training, but I am eager to learn and open to pursuing recommended courses or webinars. I actively seek out opportunities to grow by reading books about leadership and listening to podcasts that focus on personal development and effective team leadership. These resources have helped me develop practical insights and strategies, and I look forward to expanding my knowledge through more structured training in the future.

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

After spending my first year on the AACD Board of Directors focusing on observing, learning, and playing a supportive role, I have gained valuable insight into the organization's mission and governance. With this experience under my belt, I am eager to step into a more active leadership role, contributing meaningfully to the board's initiatives and strategic goals. My commitment to the AACD's vision, combined with my growing understanding of board operations, positions me to serve effectively and help drive the organization's continued success.

Steve Hoofard, CDT, AAACD

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AACD Member Since
2002

What position are you applying for?

Laboratory Member - Board of Directors

Are you an Accredited Member?

Yes

Provide your condensed bio in one paragraph

Steve Hoofard is a second generation dental technician who began his career at a very early age. Having started his own lab in 1979. He grew that into a multi-million dollar full service laboratory with a national client base. He sold that and now operates Hoofard Designs LLC. Throughout his career he has been driven by new technology and innovation. Steve is one of the earlier entrants into applying digital technology into the laboratory. He has attended the most cutting edge courses to maintain a leading edge in the industry. Steve was one of the youngest to receive certification with the National Board for Certification in Dental Technology.

He went on to receive accreditation status with the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry in 2010. He currently serves as a clinical and oral examiner for that accreditation process and has been a board member on the ABCD for 6 years, serving as chair for the last 2 of those. Currently he is just finishing a 2 year position on the Board of Directors. Steve is an editorial reviewer for Inside Dental Technology and the Journal of Cosmetic Dentistry.

Steve has lived and raised a family in Hermiston, Oregon since 1979. He enjoys the outdoors and divides his discretionary time between fly-fishing, dual sport motorcycle riding, and golf.

List your education

Educational achievements include some college, Graduate of the Institute for Oral Art and Design, the PAC-Live Institute, and many other advanced technology and dentistry courses.

List your employment history

Aesthetic Designs - Owner

MicroDental - Lab Manager, Stockholder

Hoofard Designs - Owner

List current or previous volunteer leadership positions (committees/boards) you've held within the AACD

2 terms on the ABCD - the last 2 as chair

1 term on the BOD

8 years on the BFC

2 years on the EC

Current member of the Accreditation Committee

Current DoJo Mentor

Describe any leadership experience you've had within your community or other dental organizations

I've been the Laboratory advisor for the Great Blue Heron Study Group

Church Board

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

Yes. Be open to all ideas. Voice your convictions and opinions. Respect others. Focus on what's best for the Academy.

Why are you applying for this position?

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The Academy is just now emerging from some dark times in leadership. I like to feel that I had a part in weathering those headwinds and steering the Academy into a better place. I feel that I can continue provide continuity and consistency going forward as the Academy transitions.

What is your vision for the future of the AACD?

An organization focused on moving members through accreditation and fellowship. That's our lane. Reinforce throughout dentistry that the Academy is the authority on cosmetic standards and outcomes, and helping members achieve those. Deliver the most sought after CE and speakers at the annual meeting. Cap attendance to elevate the draw and excitement. Top shelf venues. The most comprehensive and effective online learning platform.

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

Throughout my working life I have led by example. I've always been a bit of an entrepreneur, at one point owning and operating 4 businesses simultaneously (one of the businesses had 35 employees). I have never expected any employee to assume any more responsibility than I take on personally. I'm very good at multi-tasking and delegating.

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.

Well as a technician and laboratory owner for 46 years I've become accustomed to having projects and deadlines dictated to me. It's the nature of the beast for our industry. I've always been able to make things happen.... fit one more case in, one more project. If I'm not 15 minutes early I'm late. I'm currently an editorial reviewer for 2 dental publications. I've been told I'm the "go to guy" when publishing deadlines are approaching and reviews need to be done.

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.

Managing conflict is a daily challenge. I have considered all my employees and most of my client's friends. Situations constantly present themselves, say for example that one of my technicians chooses to compromise our standards and let's something slip in a production step. My responsibility is to remind him or her of what our standard is, have them correct the deficiency, and still maintain respect and friendship for that person. The same is true in dealing with a client. We may receive an impression or records for a case that may have distortions or inaccuracies which dictates a conversation. I must use tact and diplomacy to hold the line on our standards and to not present a derogatory or degrading vibe. The bottom line is "it's business not personal".

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

I think because of my years in the industry (I grew up in it) and my determination, as with anything I do, to be the best gives me a comprehensive perspective. I was a one-man laboratory for many years. Then I built and ran an 18 technician, full service laboratory. I'm now back to a boutique operation by myself. I have owned and ran businesses unrelated to our industry. I utilize daily the interdisciplinary approach in treatment planning and producing restorations. I feel like I have the ability to help close the gap between the laboratory/technician side of the academy and the clinical side. I also bring 8 years of board participation in the Academy.

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.

The strategic plan, among other things, identifies the need and desires of the Academy to grow the credential. As a technician I was motivated by the prospect/possibility of developing new relationships and potential clients by the recognition of the accomplishments the credential would afford me. While I have developed many new relationships and friendships because of the credential, my experience has revealed that this level of commitment doesn't necessarily bring new clients from accredited dentists. I have found though that it does bring a level of respect from dentists who are not AACD members.

I will continue to work towards improving the awareness, of the AACD membership in general and the accredited members specifically, of just what value an accredited technician can bring to their practice. If this was a reality within the academy I feel that more technicians would be attracted to the AACD and to pursuing accreditation. Most dentists, I believe, pursue the credential to elevate their practice and identify themselves as a better choice for potential patients. Technicians could also realize the same prospect of more rewarding working relationships and predictable outcomes if this dynamic were prominent in the Academy.

Most general dentists respect and value the relationship they share with their technician. They are likely to follow recommendations and suggestions from that technician. If that technician were an Academy member and even accredited (most technicians work with an average of 20 dentists) I think of the influence they could impose on their clients and how that could potentially grow the Academy's membership. I know I have been responsible for a number of memberships over the years.

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.

As an accredited member and Examiner, I've been in a position to mentor and encourage. I see that as a board member I will continue to have a broader responsibility in supporting the Academy and provide more value and connection to our membership. To be an example of the three pillars of the Academy.

I would expect to continue to be involved in the development and implementation of programs to benefit and grow the membership. Taking on assignments and delivering solutions.

What unique ideas do you have to build and grow our membership?

I think that the "game plan" or "turn around plan" that has been developed by the Academy staff and boards over the last year specifically, encompasses not only my ideas but the group collectively. This includes a number of initiatives that I feel will move the Academy towards sustainability and success for years to come.

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

Over the last 8 years in Academy leadership I have been through annual training by a number of different presenters.

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

My experience in AACD Leadership at the board level and how that brings consistency and continuity moving into the future.

Noemi Cruz-Orcutt, DDS

AACD Member Since
2020

What position are you applying for?

General Member - Board of Directors

Are you an Accredited Member?

No

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Provide your condensed bio in one paragraph

Obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Natural Sciences at the University of Puerto Rico. Worked as a research assistant for the University of Iowa School of Medicine department of Immunology, which led to 3 first author research publications. Earned DDS degree from the University of Iowa College of Dentistry in 2011 and was inducted as a member of the Omicron Kappa Upsilon (OKU) honor society. Completed an AEGD at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry in 2012. Graduated from The Dawson Academy in 2019 and received the Fellowship Award from the Academy of General Dentistry in July, 2023. Currently completing the Kois Center curriculum. Have been a member of Cranham Culp Digital Dental since 2021 and a clinical coach since 2023. Currently own a private practice in Mason City, Iowa (Mint Springs Dentistry) with focus in Comprehensive, Restorative and Cosmetic Dentistry.

List your education

- Bachelor's Degree in Natural Sciences, University of Puerto Rico – 2005, Valedictorian, Magna Cum Laude
- Doctor of Dental Surgery, DDS, University of Iowa College of Dentistry – 2011
- Advance Education in General Dentistry, AEGD, Virginia Commonwealth University College of Dentistry, Richmond Virginia -2012
- Fellowship Award from the Academy of General Dentistry – 2023

List your employment history

- Associate Dentist at Scottsville Family Dental; Scottsville, VA – 2012 -2014
- Associate Dentist at Swett Dentistry; Charlottesville, Va – 2014-2015
- Owner of Mint Springs Dentistry; Mason City, IA – 2015- present

List current or previous volunteer leadership positions (committees/boards) you've held within the AACD

- Member of AACD Members Relations Committee – 2023-2024
- AACD Members Relations Committee Co-chair – 2024- Present

Describe any leadership experience you've had within your community or other dental organizations

- Cranham Culp Digital Dental Clinical Coach 2023 – present
- Iowa Academy of Comprehensive Dentistry local chapter of Seattle Study Club – Restorative Advisor 2022 - present
- Mason City Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors – 2018-2021
- Virginia Academy of General Dentistry Co-Continuing Education Chair, November 2013-June 2015
- Hispanic Dental Association Co-Vice President, August 2009 - August 2010
- Treasurer of Student Research Group, August 2009 - August 2010
- ADA Student Ambassador Iowa Chapter, August 2009 – August 2010
- Hispanic Dental Association President, August 2008 – August 2009
- Hispanic Dental Association Treasurer, August 2007 – August 2008

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

I have served as board of directors of the Mason City Chamber of Commerce from 2018 to 2021. I am on the advisory board, as a restorative dentist, of the Iowa Academy of Comprehensive Dentistry, Seattle Study Club from 2023-present.

During this experience I have been able to consider different points of view working for what's best for the organization. Part of the responsibilities are evaluating the budget and analyzing financial statements, to ensure organization is within budget and maintains financial health. Developing Strategic plan to maintain the organization in good standing moving forward. Working with a group of people with different ideas moving together towards a common goal. Being able to analyze situations, make decisions, while at the same time maintaining the values and vision of the organization.

Why are you applying for this position?

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I am proud of this organization and the values it stands for. As a result of my involvement and being a member of this organization, I have seen myself grow in my dental skills and improve the level of care for my patients. I want to put my knowledge and skills to be a contributing force to the progression of the AACD. I would like to be part of the group of people who are making a difference in the future of the organization. I truly believe that my skills can help keep moving in that direction by providing leadership and insight.

What is your vision for the future of the AACD?

I see the AACD as a well-respected organization, recognized as the authority in the field of cosmetic dentistry and as the leader in education, information and networking.

An organization that will be welcoming to new members with different experience levels with the desire to assist in their journey in order to increase knowledge and skills in cosmetic dentistry.

An organization that brings together a group of highly talented dentists that are making a difference for our patients, dental colleagues and dentistry in general.

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

I consider myself the kind of leader that encourages change and innovation to improve an organization. I work very well with others and try to listen and consider different perspectives to make collaborative decisions. As a leader, I utilize the strengths of those I am working with to maximize each person's potential and performance.

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.

I create specific goals and communicate them clearly with others in order to develop strategies to get the task at hand completed. I develop time tables, checklists and detailed processes to keep moving forward in order to get the desired project completed. Clear communication is critical for everyone to understand the direction where the organization is heading and the expected results. Once I establish these strategies and processes to complete a project, I am very committed to executing them to accomplish the goal.

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.

I believe that friendships should not get in the way when it comes to ethical issues and decisions regarding policies to keep the integrity of the organization. The best way to approaching these kinds of issues is by trying to communicate them clearly, and establishing boundaries with others around. At the same time, I try to make others understand what is the position of the organization and why certain decisions should be made in a certain manner.

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

I see myself as an excellent communicator and very approachable. I am passionate, energetic, enthusiastic and can motivate others to move forward particularly in projects that imply change.

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.

I am passionate about cosmetic dentistry and have always put a high value in continuing education to keep up with the latest advancements in dentistry, with the main goal of providing the best possible care to my patients.

Utilizing my communication skills and leadership experience, I see myself as an instrument of the AACD to help our organization grow encouraging dentists to maintain the highest standards and ethical conduct in cosmetic dentistry, which are some of the pillars of the AACD.

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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.

While having been involved with the Members Relations Committee, I try to understand what is important to the members and how we can retain and also attract new ones. My main goal is to make sure the members feel welcome and want to assist our organization in making it more appealing to potential new members.

What unique ideas do you have to build and grow our membership?

Even though I have noticed higher activity on social media, this is an area where we need to continue putting a high effort in order to increase visibility and attract new possible members.

Also, campaigns to increase awareness in dental schools, by organizing visits and presenting the AACD as the leading expert in the field to encourage dental students to participate in the scientific sessions.

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

I have completed a 2-day seminar about high impact presentations and the art of public speaking by the Dale Carnegie & Associates Global.

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

I am very passionate about dentistry and delivering to our patients to the highest possible standards. I have a great desire to look at alternatives to increase awareness of the general public about responsible esthetics. I also see myself as an ambassador of the AACD to help improve the perception of many of our colleagues regarding the field of cosmetic dentistry.