



**Name**

Jasmine Shafagh

**Email**

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**Please upload a photo of yourself. A professional headshot is preferred.**



**Please list your qualifications for this position. (Leadership roles, experience, skills, additional training, etc.)**

I was the Bulletin Editor for the Dental Society of Chester County & Delaware County (in PA) from 2017-2023. I was also the Associate Editor of The Bulletin, Newsletter of the Valley Forge Dental Association, 2nd District of the PDA from 2021-2023.

I am currently the Vice President of the AADEJ (American Association of Dental Editors and Journalists), and an Associate Editor for the PDJ (Pennsylvania Dental Journal). I completed this role remotely as I am an affiliate member of the PDA.

I have an extensive background in journalism, writing, editing and layout, and I am working on becoming a CDE (certified dental editor).

**Please list any boards, committees or other groups you currently or previously have served on (dental or non-dental) along with years of service.**

-Associate Editor of the Pennsylvania Dental Association's Journal (PDJ) - 2023-Present

-Vice President of the American Association of Dental Editors and Journalists (AADEJ) 2023-Present

- New Dentist Task Group for FDA 2024
- DEIC (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee) Member for PDA, 2023-Present
- PDA Communications and Public Relations Advisory Committee 2022-Present
- Member of the Central Florida Women in Dentistry Group

**Please share any accomplishments while serving in other leadership positions.**

-ICD Newsletter Journalism Award - Honorable Mention – Editor of The Dental Society of Chester County and Delaware County’s The Bulletin - 2023

-Recognition Award recipient, the Dental Society of Chester County and Delaware County - for the Bulletin publication 2023

-Pennsylvania Dental Association’s (PDA) 10 Under 10 Award recipient

**The mission of the FDA is to "Help Members Succeed". Do you feel that the association is fully utilizing its resources to fulfill this mission? If yes, share why. If no, what additional actions would you propose?**

Yes. I believe the mission of all of the dental societies and the ADA is to help members succeed. I think the various task forces and committees do a great job of presenting members’ needs to better address them. But there is always room for improvement. That is the essence of life.

I think the root cause of declining membership across the board is due to a lack of proper dissemination of information regarding what we are actually doing and accomplishing to the members. As a leader, I am often asked “why should I join, what does the ADA/FDA/PDA do for me?” I think that overall, we could do a better job at being more transparent about our advocacy efforts and about how we are protecting and lobbying for our profession and showcase all of our legislative victories. This comes in tandem with being a good editor. We must share timely and relevant information with our members through various forms of print and media to demonstrate how we continue to help them succeed.

**Please submit a 500-700 word sample editorial article on the following topic: What are the biggest challenges you see for the FDA as an organization in the coming years and what are ways you suggest the FDA can meet those challenges?**

To be honest, I have not been as involved with the FDA as I would have liked. As a dental student at LECOM and as the former ASDA President, I had the pleasure of being highly involved with the FDA, contributed to Today’s FDA, and sat on various ASDA student panels. Since returning to Florida in late 2019, I have tried to get more involved, but things came to a halt with COVID. The FDA sent out a survey about getting involved and I showed interest but never heard back. I connected with some FDA administrators who I knew from dental school several times and expressed interest in being involved. I was once told that I may not be “relatable” since I wasn’t working full time. That struck a cord with me.

Not only am I relatable, but I am also social and a people-connector. I am also a leader. I still find time to work, raise two kids under 3 years old and maintain my vast involvement in organized dentistry in two separate states and at the national level with the AADEJ. Luckily, I have been able to maintain my relationships and involvement with the PDA remotely. I continue to stay involved with the PDA, and I am hoping to get involved more locally with the CFDDA and FDA.

Although I am not as up-to-date with the FDA, I imagine the challenges they face are similar to those faced by all state dental societies: declining membership, trying to meet and help members where they are at (considering different points in their careers), and continually demonstrating the value of membership to its members.

There are also many challenges facing dentistry as a profession, including maintaining high quality of care

while also being profitable and finding good work-life balance, dealing with inflation and increased costs of operation and PPE, insurance company fee reductions, and maintaining staff with competitive and demanding salaries. Another challenge is the astronomical cost of setting up a new private dental practice, keeping up with the pace and price tag of new and emergent technology in the profession, and competing with DSO's.

As stated before, the FDA can help meet these many challenges by staying transparent with its members about their advocacy efforts to help maintain membership numbers. We are always stronger in numbers. Using printed word by means of newsletters, bulletins, magazines, emails and social media helps get this information out to the members in a timely manner. It shows we are present and it showcases what we and our members are doing. It also demonstrates an open door and affable presence about the society and its administrators as a whole.

As a young dentist, I believe it's important for the FDA to prioritize the needs of younger dentists who are trying to 'make it.' I am lucky that I was introduced to organized dentistry through ASDA as a first year dental student. I worked hard to maintain our membership every single year, especially fourth year as we then became ADA members. I loved how involved the FDA was with the students. I loved being involved with student panels, with the house of delegates at the FDA, and feeling like my opinion mattered and that my role was important. I always felt that the FDA was very gracious to the students. If we continue to engage and have open dialogue with dental students through the 3 dental schools in our great state, we can pave the way for continued success for the profession in the future with new leadership.

**Please provide any additional information you would like to share.**

I can submit my CV upon request. Thanks so much for your time and consideration.

## Writing Sample Submission:

### The Amalgamation of Dentistry and Journalism

Both dentistry and journalism are in my blood. And the way the two became intertwined and blended feels like a natural phenomenon. I thank my father, my greatest role model and mentor in life, for introducing these two passions to me at an early age.

While attending dental school at Tehran University of Medical Sciences - School of Dentistry, my father was editor of the school's dental journal and also a journalist for the Kayhan Newspaper of Iran. Upon graduation, he became a professor in Tehran and published several dental books which are still being taught in the dental school today. He was a true academic who would fly weekly to teach at both Pahlavi (now Shiraz) University of Medical Sciences - Dental School and the Isfahan University of Medical Sciences - Dental School, which are in different parts of the country. He was also chair of the annual Iranian Dental Association Congress. It is noteworthy to mention that my great uncle was also an Orthodontist who taught in the department of oral medicine in Tehran.

Eager to enhance his knowledge, my father applied to residency programs in the US and completed his fellowship in prosthodontics at the University of Iowa. He subsequently taught prosthodontics at UPenn while obtaining his second DMD degree. During this time, he also co-authored several other books on fixed prosthodontics. After moving back to Iran and opening a state-of-the-art practice for several years, the revolution caused him to sell his practice and make a permanent move back to the US. He became an associate professor of dental anatomy and occlusion at UF before moving back to Pennsylvania to teach at UPenn for several years. He then opened another private practice in Havertown, PA, where he has worked for the last 35 plus years, hiring both me and my brother, Dr. Shaheen Shafagh (currently the new owner) as his associates.

Growing up, I noticed how my father always asked people the best and most relative questions to get to the root of the cause, no pun intended. Both in clinical dentistry and in real life scenarios, he was always assertive, curious, and inquisitive. I picked up on these skills and implemented them into my own life. In middle school at The Episcopal Academy, I became editor of our school's yearbook, and in high school, I joined the editorial board of our school newspaper, The Scholium, and Spanish newsletter, La Prensa Macondo, becoming Editor-in-Chief of both. I orchestrated content meetings, sign-up meetings, weekend layout and editing sessions, and always interviewed someone for the main article. I met with interviewees on my free time, was prepared with thought-provoking questions, and delivered meaningful pieces for the monthly newspaper.

I was also fortunate for the opportunity to attend the Acel Moore Career Development Workshop in Journalism with the Philadelphia Inquirer and won first place and a small college scholarship award for my article on immigration reform policies. It was a pivotal experience for me, getting to travel downtown and sit in the Inquirer reporters' desks and chairs and to learn from their staff. For my senior project, I even took the time to create and publish a detailed instructional/ layout manual for future editors of the school newspaper to follow suit. I continued my passion for journalism in dental school at LECOM School of Dental Medicine, overseeing our Composite newsletter as our ASDA President and published for ASDA's blog and the FDA's journal. Upon graduation from dental school and moving back to PA, I was asked to join the leadership group

for our local and I immediately volunteered to be the Editor of The Bulletin, as I felt my skills would lend best to this role.

I truly enjoyed my long tenure as The Bulletin Editor of the Dental Society of Chester County and Delaware County from around 2017-2023. During this time, I was also an associate editor for the Bulletin newsletter for the Valley Forge Dental Association, 2nd District of the PDA, and I also helped put together the CE pamphlets for DKU - Dentists Keeping up! I have loved working with our esteemed board members throughout the years, learned so much from them and truly felt inspired by their experience and wisdom in both dentistry and organized dentistry. The Bulletin evolved tremendously under my leadership, and it continues to flourish and adapt to the changing times and needs of its readers. As the editor, I attribute my success to staying organized and following deadlines, being open to the suggestions of our board members, encouraging change, being open to new ideas and implementing them, and having everyone get involved. To me, The Bulletin was only as good as the content provided by our directors and members. It was a group effort! While written print seems like a relic of the past in today's era of e-mails, social media, and broadcast journalism, I feel like an old soul in a small niche of editors and journalists who still prefers to hold a newsletter in hand or to underline a book. I truly feel that the time, effort and cost that goes into written publications needs to be justified by its worth to the readers and it needs to reflect the society, showcase its members' achievements and disseminate information about the advocacy efforts of organized dentistry and the benefits to its members.

Being The Bulletin editor and staying active with my local really became my safe haven in the last several years. Many may not know this about me, but I got married and moved to Florida in late 2019 right before the COVID pandemic hit. It was a particularly isolating time as a new transplant to Florida. Having to take some time off from work due to COVID related office closures and my pregnancies, and adjusting to life as a new mom, I truly appreciated my strong connections with the members of our local and the ability to stay involved and committed to organized dentistry and the dental profession remotely. I finished my tenure as The Bulletin editor remotely and continue to stay actively involved with the PDA as a Florida resident.

Staying involved has also really opened up a lot of doors for me both personally and professionally. Not only have my colleagues become my mentors, but they are also my friends. In the last several years, I had the opportunity to become a member of the inaugural class of the PDA Leadership Academy, a mentor for the Leadership Academy, won the Recognition Award from the Dental Society of Chester County and Delaware County, and was also recognized as one of PDA's 10 under 10 award recipients for 2023. It was a true honor to be recognized for both awards, particularly to be selected amongst my fellow nominees who have all achieved a myriad of various successes in their young careers.

Another exciting recent development was receiving honorable mention for the International College of Dentists (ICD) Newsletter Journalism Awards for the Bulletin at the ADA meeting last year. Shortly before this meeting, one of the members of the American Association of Dental Editors and Journalists (AADEJ) reached out to me and asked me to become their new Vice President. At the ADA meeting, I was also inducted into the prestigious ICD after nomination from my mentors in our local! And shortly after the ADA meeting, where I had the chance to catch up with Dr. Steve Radack, my former professor at LECOM and PDJ editor, he asked me to come on

as an Associate Editor of the PDJ! I am also an active member of PDA's Communications and Public Relations Advisory Committee and a member of the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEIC) task force and was recently appointed to a New Dentist Task Group for the FDA.

I am often amazed by how the cascading sequence of events has unraveled in my life. When one door closes, another opens. You just have to be open to the discomfort of the unknown, change and growth that is to occur. One thing I have learned from my many years of involvement in journalism, organized dentistry and leadership is that in life, you must show up and show interest. You must be in the driver's seat and take control and action. As the adage states, 'if you're not at the table then you're on the menu.' Also, what you put in is what you get out. The best analogy is Newton's third law of motion. Things just don't happen by themselves. You must put in the time and effort to see the results. There are no shortcuts in life.

Being involved in editing and journalism has made me more precise, detail-oriented and inquisitive, all skills which make me a better clinician. I consider myself a good listener, I ask the right questions, and truly listen to my patients' needs and desires before recommending certain treatment plans. I am passionate about helping patients take charge of their own health and empowering them to have a better quality of life and to achieve their goals through my care.

I am so thankful to both of my parents for their unwavering mentorship and support of my life and career. I am humbled by the opportunity to be involved in so many different avenues in organized dentistry and journalism at the tripartite level and beyond. I have learned so much from each experience and mentor I have come across and continue to utilize and hone these skills to try and better myself and bring utility to each group I am a part of. The more I surround myself by successful and inspirational people, the more fruitful my life becomes. Dentistry is an amazing profession, and there are so many ways to get involved and for your voice to be heard. Who knows what the future holds for me, but I am here and open to it all. Maybe I will try something new and delve into broadcast journalism in the future. Either way, I feel lucky that I can be involved from wherever in the world I am, even though I consider myself a Philly girl for life!