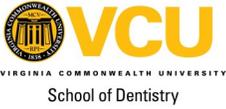


A LOOK INTO THE MODERN FLOSSIFY OF THE VCU SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR, ANNA PITZ, D2016

What Organized Dentistry is Doing for You

ADA? VDA? RDS? ASDA? It may sound like a bowl of alphabet soup, but these organizations are hard at work advocating for your education and your future as a dentist. Whether you realize it or not, you play an important role in all of these organizations. We are incredibly lucky to have local and state dental associations, the Richmond Dental Society and the Virginia Dental Association, that heavily invest in the students at VCU SOD because we are the future of these organizations. If you are not taking advantage of all that these organizations have to offer, you are



Top of page: Connor McCall (D2018), Isaac Goode (D2017), Dani Howell (D2017), and Kayla Roe (D2018) in front of the ADA Headquarters in Chicago. Above: D3s and D4s with Component 4 President, Dr. Certosimo, at the Richmond Dental Society Meeting

missing out on crucial opportunities to further your awareness of the dental profession beyond life as a student.

In November, several students had the opportunity to attend the Richmond Dental Society membership meeting. It was an evening full of networking with local dentists, many of which are leaders at both the local and state levels, and visiting with faculty outside the classroom. It was inspiring to see the involvement of many of our faculty within the society. For those of you

who are not aware, our very own Dr. Fred Certosimo is the President of Component 4 (the fancy name for our district in Virginia). Dr. Svirsky was the guest speaker of the night, and little did we know, this meeting would end up a flashback to D2 Oral Pathology class. He presented numerous cases that he has received recently via email and kept the dental students on their toes to solve these cases in typical Svirsky style—a straight up call out. However, he eventually spared us when he spotted Endodontics and AEGD residents in the audience and put them on the hot-seat.

As we expressed our gratitude to many of the members for allowing us to attend that evening, we kept finding ourselves thanked in return. The members were excited to see dental students' eagerness to be involved in organized dentistry and stressed the importance of continuing our involvement, regardless of the state we end up practicing in. It cannot be stressed enough that we are the future of the profession and these organizations, so take advantage of the opportunities available to you now to get a taste of what involvement is like!

Calendar of Events

ASDA District 4 Meeting	January 9-11	Greenville, SC
VDA Legislative Day on the Hill	January 16	Richmond, VA
VDA Committee Meetings	January 16-17	Richmond, VA
Give Kids a Smile Day	February 6	Richmond, VA
ASDA Annual Session	February 18-21	Boston, MA
White Coat Ceremony	February 27	Richmond, VA
Suffolk MOM Project	February 28	Suffolk, VA
D1 and D2 Spring Break	March 9-13	—
Hinman Conference	March 26-28	Atlanta, GA
National Dental Student Lobby Day	April 13-14	Washington, DC
Clinic and Research Day	April 16	Richmond, VA
MCV Reunion Weekend	April 17-19	Richmond, VA

Progress in Funding

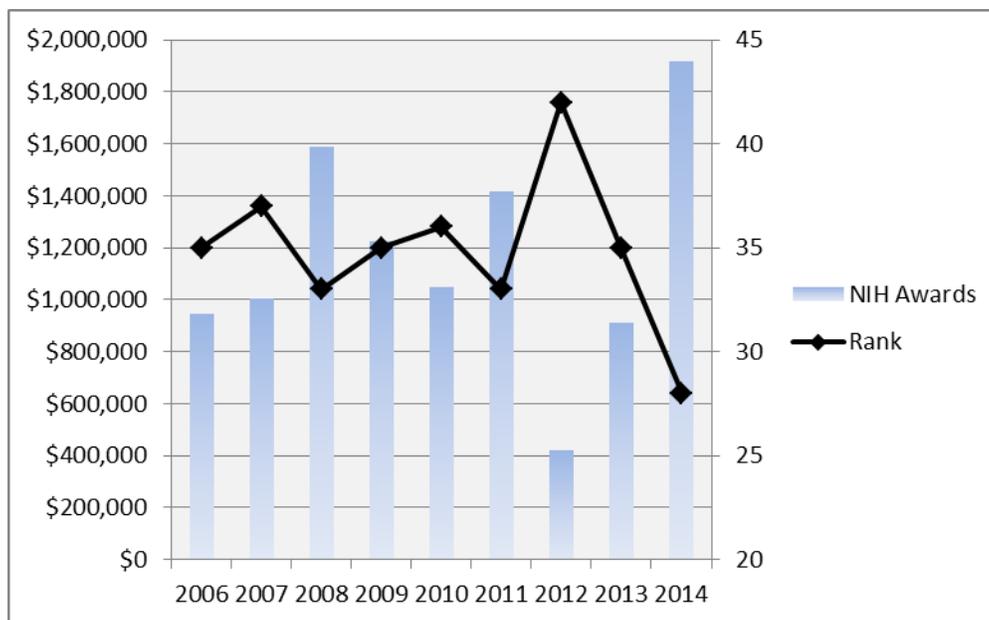
David C. Sarrett, DMD, MS, Dean VCU School of Dentistry

It has been a good year for the VCU School of Dentistry's research program. For the first time in many years, the school's level of research awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) reached nearly \$2M and its ranking among schools of dentistry climbed to number 28. As you can see in the graph, the school's ranking has been hovering in the mid-thirties since 2006 but dropped to a ranking of 42 in 2012.



Like all organizations, the school has gone through a rebuilding phase and recruited new research faculty members to support its mission in the area of research and scholarship. I am happy to report that work is now proving successful. VCU is a leading urban research university with a comprehensive academic medical center and thus, it is expected that the school of dentistry contributes to the research mission. There are many ways to measure the research productivity of institutions such as the number of scientific publications, research presentation, total research funding, PhD en-

rollment, and post-doctoral trainees; however, funding from the NIH is considered a key metric. You may have heard that the school will be starting a new PhD/MS program soon. The VCU administration has approved the creation of a PhD in Oral Health Research with an MS option and the final phase approval by the Virginia State Council on Higher Education is underway. We plan to enroll the first students in fall of 2015 in this unique program. The concentration areas for research to be conducted by these new students will be in cancer, infectious diseases, bioengineering, or health services research. The program is available to both dental and non-dental students.



Research funding awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to the VCU School of Dentistry and rankings among schools of dentistry in funding from the NIH



VCU Endodontics Welcomes Change!

Dr. Garry L. Myers, DDS



Dr. Garry Myers, DDS

The VCU Department of Endodontics has seen many changes take place over the past few months and looks forward to continuing its efforts at inspiring excellence in clinical endodontics for both our dental students and residents alike. The obvious changes were the addition of two new full-time faculty members, Dr. Garry Myers and Dr. Clara Spatafore. Both individuals left full time private practices (in Olympia, WA and Sewick-

ley, PA respectively) to join the VCU endodontic department. Dr. Spatafore comes in as the new Interim Department Chairman for Endodontics as former chair, Dr. Richard Archer has transitioned into his new role as VCU dental school's Clinical Dean. With the addition of Dr. Myers and Dr. Spatafore to the current endodontic faculty of Dr. Karan Replogle and Dr. Virginia East and with Dr. Archer's continued part-time presence in the endodontic clinics, students and residents will see familiar faces, fresh faces and new perspectives as the department continues its goals of excellence in endodontic education.

Along with the faculty changes, the endodontic department has also spearheaded efforts that will result in the following: 1) installation of a digital imaging system in the preclinical dental laboratory (Woolwine lab) which will

complete the transition into today's digital x-ray world within the dental school and 2) the acquisition of two dental microscopes to be incorporated into the pre-doctoral endodontic clinic for use by the dental students when providing clinical endodontic care. The department continues to strive to implement today's technological advancements in clinical care for both the pre-doctoral and post-graduate programs at VCU.

Some more subtle changes occurring within the department will be focusing on goals for the near and distant future. Strategic planning sessions with short and long range objectives are underway. An initiative to raise funds to endow a professorship within the department in honor of Dr. Neil Dodds is in progress. And plans are being made for putting together an annual continuing education day sponsored by the Department of Endodontics in years to come. Change can be good and within the VCU endodontic department change for the future has been embraced. The people that will benefit the most will be the students we teach AND the patients we serve. Feel free to stop by our department to say hello, share some thoughts and meet our staff and faculty. We are excited about the future and happy to be an integral part of the VCU team!



Dr. Clara Spatafore, DDS

2014 VDA Strategic Planning Session: A Student's Prospective

Kandice Klepper, D2015, Student Body President



As I reflect back on my involvement in the 2015 VDA Strategic Planning session, nothing resonates more with me than a quote from my classmate Jeremy Jordan, "Teamwork makes the dream work." This is the foundation of organized dentistry and has quickly become one of my motivating mantras. From my experience thus far, organized dentistry is a collaborative effort to advance the profession through advocacy, education, service, and support. These fundamentals were evident at each level of the 2015 Strategic Planning process. Along side of the talented current and past VDA presidents, Board of Directors, component presidents, committee chairs, and VCU dental student colleagues, we set off to review the accomplishments of 2014 while developing future goals for 2015.

On the forefront of the 2015 advocacy initiatives is the Community Dental Health Coordinator (CDHC). Dr. Mark Crabtree unveiled the VDA's proposal to address access to care issues in Virginia with the creation of a new dental workforce model. The aim of the CDHC is to decrease the frequency of emergency room visits due to dental pain through preventative measures and education. As of 2014, the ADA's CDHC model successfully graduated over 30 students in over eight states. Under the supervision of a dentist, the CDHC provides preventative services including oral hygiene instruction, application of fluoride varnish, placement of sealants and the dissemination of 'navigation services' that provide affordable care. With the institution of the CDHC, the VDA hopes to increase oral health education while also decreasing the barriers of access to care.

Under the leadership of Dr. Justin Norbo, the New Dentist Committee highlighted the upcoming first annual Virginia New Dentist Conference, which will be held in August 2015 in Wintergreen, VA. The meeting will provide recent dental graduates and current students, the opportunity to learn more about organized dentistry while networking, participating in various continuing education courses, and enjoying the splendors of the Blue Ridge Mountains. This conference is sure to be a success for all who are able to attend!

In addition to the CDHC and the New Dentist Conference, another key aspect discussed during the Strategic Planning Session was the development of a leadership certificate program. This program will allow new dentists (in practice for 10 years or less) to be appointed to leadership roles on the state level while working with colleagues to learn about the fundamentals of organized dentistry. Though the certificate program is in the early stages of planning, it aims to foster both new leaders and mentors.



Jeremy Jordan (D2015), Kristin Edwards (D2016), Kandice Klepper (D2015) with Dr. Mike Link, VDA President

With the decline of membership in organized dentistry nationwide, it is essential to continue to inspire our members to take an active role in the future of our profession.

Through the diligent efforts of the dedicated participants of the Strategic Planning Session our profession continues to thrive. The accomplishments of 2014 and established goals of 2015 are prime examples of how the collaborative efforts of the VDA are focused toward a brighter future. As a dental student, I was honored to have participated in this process. It was truly inspiring to be amidst such an accomplished group of individuals who all shared one common goal: advancing the profession through advocacy, education, and support. As I look to my forward to starting my career, I aspire to continue my involvement in organized dentistry and encourage each of my colleagues to also take the challenge, reach outside of your comfort zone, and take an active role in the profession; we are the future!



D3s Lend Their Hand Skills

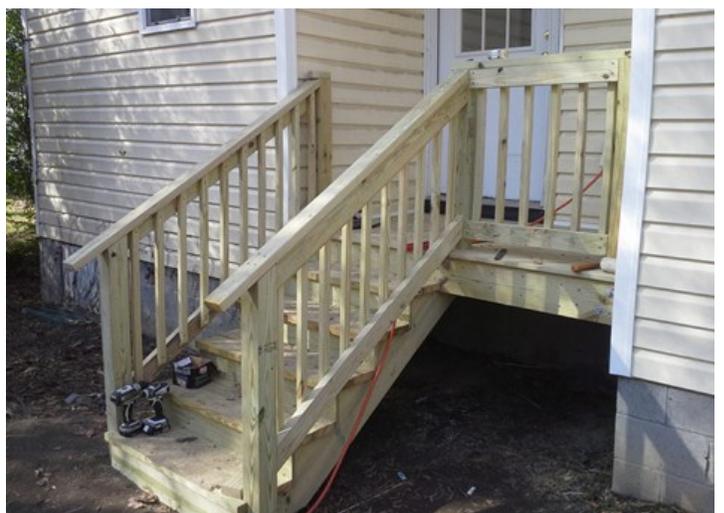
Tayyaba Syed, D2016

On two bright Saturday mornings, D3 students woke up early to lend their hand skills. However, they weren't doing dentistry; they were helping to build new homes for deserving families. Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization that builds and repairs homes for those who may not have the opportunity of home ownership otherwise. They use volunteer labor and donations to reduce costs while allowing the greater community to actively participate in the efforts.

The first home, located in a beautiful neighborhood in Midlothian, was part of the Habitat for Heroes program. This program specifically provides veteran families the opportunity to own a home. Much of the work was already completed in anticipation of the dedication only a few weeks later on Veteran's Day but there was still much to be done. At the direction of the lead builder, Ron, our group helped to install the latticework under the front porch, spackle any holes in the walls, and remove paint from the ceiling molding. We learned how to use many new power tools including a chop saw, impact driver, drill, and hammer drill. We also learned which materials to use for the best results and longevity. The best part of the morning was meeting the family whose home we were building and to see the excitement in the

eyes of the two young girls as they ran up to see the progress of their future rooms.

The second home was another small but cozy renovation in Southside Richmond. This home needed a new front and back porch as well as a new fence. Our group worked with Ron to build balusters and hand rails for the back porch, again using all the power tools to speed thin-



Top of Page: Colleen Moreno, Mike Mutztafago, Amber Brooks, Phu Cai, Kristina Luong (P2016), and Tayyaba Syed spend their Saturday morning volunteering with Habitat for Humanity
Above: Newly built back porch thanks to these handy members of the Class of 2016

gs along. We also thoroughly swept the house in preparation for carpet and started to tear down an old wire fence that was intertwined amongst trees and bushes. Meanwhile, we got to spend some quality time picking Ron's brain about home improvement. Overall the two builds were a great success. We learned a lot about power tools, building, and home improvement in general! The next build should prove to be even more exciting; they will be building a home from the ground up in February so stay tuned for your chance to give back even more with your hand skills.



Above: Ryan Costner, Tayyaba Syed, and Vinita Acklin after a long morning of building

Jamaica Project 2014

Courtney Schlenker, D2015



D4s working at the Long Pond Clinic in Jamaica

It is hard to believe that just three weeks ago in November, nine of my classmates and I were waking up yards from a beautiful ocean. Water so clear it actually changed colors depending on the angle of the sun. Maybe it was the warm hearts of the Jamaican people or the picturesque scenery but I immediately felt a sense of calmness as I stepped my feet on the island of Jamaica. I forgot about the stresses of school, boards, residency, or personal relationships that weighed me down back at home. Each person I met in Jamaica came with a story. Ask a local to tell you about themselves and you were more likely to learn about their loving family and love of country before occupation or money entered the conversation. Even with the overwhelming poverty, the people of Jamaica were optimistic, calm, and soulful. It was contagious.



The VCU Jamaica project was started over 28 years ago and has been supported by various benefactors and continued by the leadership of Dr. Robert Barnes and Dr. Mick Pope. The project has been able to survive each year by the generous donations from dental faculty, alumni, students and also by the continued mentorship from area practitioners. Without this faithful support the project would no longer exist.

The project consists of 24-27 dental and dental hygiene students broken up into three individual weeks. Each group is mentored by volunteering faculty coming from Virginia. Most days are spent at the main clinic at Long Pond in Trelawny.

However, a lucky few will get to travel inland up the gorgeous mountains to Albert Town Health Center. If that isn't enough to suit your fancy the last day of clinic is spent at Good Hope Plantation. Here, your afternoon will be filled with horseback riding, zip lining, or 4wheeling; a thank you for your service to them.

I promise you, this is a once in a lifetime experience. To this date, I have not met a group of people more thankful for your time and skills. Furthermore, each of my classmates on the trip said they wouldn't trade the experience for anything. To quote one of my classmates and aspiring oral surgeon, this was the "BEST DENTAL WEEK EVER!"



Above: Courtney performs an extraction at the clinic

The VDA New Dentist Committee



REAL WORLD TOUR

Kristin Edwards, D2016

On a warm Thursday afternoon in August, 24 dental students loaded up into two white vans waiting outside Lyons. We were on our way to visit three private practices in the Richmond area. Our first stop was Dr. Londrey's, a private practitioner that had been in the same space for his entire thriving career. He described the intricacies of dental insurance (avoid it if you can), finding and keeping good staff (communicate constantly and treat them well) and developing a practice from scratch.

Our next stop brought us to Dr. Gardner of Gardner Orthodontics. He detailed his office philosophy, including many lessons he'd learned from the great Walt Disney. Walking into the open bay, we felt submerged...literally. Dr. Gardner transformed the ceiling into a river underside. We saw frog legs, ducks "looking" for fish and the underbelly of a chocolate lab chasing a ball. It was these small details he believed helped patients relax when they walked into the treatment space. Dr. Gardner recommended several fantastic books that helped guide his philosophy, including *Les-*

sons from the Mouse, Inside Magic Kingdom, Raving Fans, Who Moved my Cheese and *Fish*. On a personal note, Dr. Gardner is one of the most consistently upbeat individuals I've met, so seeing his office and listening to his thought process provided fantastic insight.

After a few wrong turns, we made it to the last office of Dr. McMunn. He had several associates under his wing and to put it frankly, his office was huge. He educated us on the importance of sleep apnea, or rather how to screen for it and the significant impact it can have on your patient's health. If you have the chance to hear Dr. McMunn speak, make sure you do. He is an invaluable source on sleep apnea and his passion for the subject is contagious.. Just make sure you don't have patients the next day; otherwise, you'll diagnose everyone with a tongue with the condition.

Many thanks to the VDA's New Dentist Committee for facilitating such a fantastic trek to three very different practices. Although this is the second year doing the Real World Tour, we hope to continue this every summer. If you have not had the chance to visit, make sure it's on your to-do list this upcoming summer.

Above: VCU dental students enjoy pearls of wisdom from Dr. Londrey, Dr. McMunn and the pictured Dr. Gardner during the VDA's Real World Tour





SNDA Impressions Day 2014

Farren Billue, D2016

VCU Student National Dental Association (SNDA) held its annual Impressions Day on November 8th, 2014. The program reaches out to underrepresented minority undergraduate students who are interested in dentistry and dental hygiene.



This year SNDA hosted over 50 students from a variety of schools including Howard University, East Carolina University, UNC-Greensboro, UNC, and VCU. The pre-dental students got to experience Dentsim, take and pour up impressions, pack amalgam, participate in mock interviews from the

dental hygiene students. We had the pleasure of listening to our own Dr. Tiffany Williams speak about her journey through dental school, residency, and her arrival to her new position as an assistant professor in the VCU Pediatric Dentistry Department.

One of the larger missions of SNDA is to promote and encourage the increase of minority enrollment and rete-



Shadae Anderson, D2017 assists a pre-dental student with Dentsim



tion in dental schools. As an organization, we are always excited about this program! Not only is it a lot of fun to spend time with the pre-dental students and reminisce about the times when we were in their shoes, but it allows the students to get a behind the scene view of dental school and the interview process. We were also grateful for the helpful hand from the Hispanic Dental Association (HDA), as several of its members readily volunteered to be a part of this year's program. As a member of SNDA, I look forward to this program every year. During my sophomore year of college in 2009, I had the opportunity to attend an Impressions Program and it encouraged me to continue following my passion for dentistry. It is truly rewarding to interact with the pre-dental students and to pay the experience forward.

First Annual MUPit Campaign

Officially recognize individuals with intellectual disabilities as a medically underserved population

Lyubov Slascheva, D2016 and Christina Horton, D2017

Have you seen yellow ribbons on student scrubs? Or maybe you enjoyed a sweet treat while signing a bright green poster. On November 20th and 21st, the Special Care Interest Group (SCIG) advocated for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) to be granted Medically Underserved Population (MUP) status by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Individuals with IDD face many barriers to accessing adequate dental care and need additional support to achieve quality healthcare. HRSA is responsible for Health Professional Shortage Area Designations, which may be geographic, population, or facility based. Designations can allow fund-



First year students sign the petition for individuals with IID to be granted MUP status

ing opportunities for primary care grants, health professional training and support, and Medicare/Medicaid payment enhancements. While individuals with IDD are not currently designated as an MUP, the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry (AADMD) determined in 2004 that individuals with IDD should be considered an MUP based on HRSA criteria. Unfortunately, there was no formal response to the request. The American Medical Association (AMA) and the American Dental Association (ADA) have since passed resolutions insisting that individuals with IDD be granted MUP status. The SCIG, as a VCU student chapter affiliate of the AADMD, is joining the National MUP Campaign to raise awareness and support about this initiative. During two lunch breaks, over 140 students signed the petition urging HRSA to respond to the request made in 2004 by the AADMD. We thank each of you for considering and supporting this complex issue!



Lyubov Slashcheva (AADMD Student Resident Committee President, '16)
 Reem Alhussain (SCIG President, AADMD Student/Resident Committee Newsletter Chair, '15)
 Christina Horton (SCIG Respect Campaign Chair, '17)

Research Spotlight: Alyssa Franklin



Are you giving your oral surgery patients proper post-operative instructions for how to dispose of their blood-soaked gauze packs? According to a recent study published in the November 2014 issue of *The Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery* by Alyssa Franklin, D2017, along with Dr. Daniel M. Laskin from the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, **probably not**. This study aimed to determine whether there is any consistency in the instructions that oral surgeons give to patients regarding disposal of their gauze packs and whether these instructions are adequate to avoid the potential of cross contamination. Out of 65 respondents to a survey given to patients, only one reported having received such information. They concluded that patients are not provided with adequate instructions regarding disposal of blood-soaked gauze, therefore increasing the opportunity for serious viral infections to inadvertently infect others. Suggestions for improvement in post-operative protocol include putting a greater emphasis on instructions regarding proper management of gauze packs, providing a self-sealing plastic bag for disposal, and instructing thorough hand washing after touching the gauze pack.

Congratulations on your publication, Alyssa! Be sure to check out her full article in the November issue of *The Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery*.

Franklin A, Laskin DM. Are Oral-Maxillofacial Surgery Patients Given Proper Postoperative Instructions for Disposal of Blood-Soaked Gauze Packs? *Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery* Vol 72(11): 2107–2108.



Psi Omega: 122 Years Strong

Elise Hartmann, D2015



The fraternity continues to grow with the induction of 28 new members this Fall. Initiation kept the inductees busy and welcomed them into the Gamma Omicron chapter of our organization. A big thank you goes out to Kelsey and Liz for hosting the event! Psi Omega continues to stay involved in the local community, joining CARITAS in their mission to improve the health and well being of those in need.



D4's, Michelle Graham, Kristy Greenfield and Erin Sharkey pose with their new friends in Jamaica

Tis the season for the Psi Omega annual Tacky Lights tour. What better way to celebrate the holidays, but with your frat brothers in a festive trolley touring Richmond's famous light displays?! Final exams put excess stress on our fine dental students, but Psi Omega strives to relieve some of that stress and keep the students balanced and well rounded. The festivities don't stop there. The frat plans to journey to Snowshoe in January for a weekend of skiing, snowboarding and hydrating back at base camp.



Second year ladies at Psi O initiation in November

Some of Psi O's seniors travelled to Jamaica this Fall to enjoy a little fun in the sun, but most importantly to provide dental care to some needy locals. The work hard play hard attitude of Psi O stands true no matter where in the world we travel. From all the Psi bro's, have a wonderful holiday season and don't let the demands of school cause you to lose sight of the big picture.



DSD: Keeping the Tradition Fresh

Esther Lin, D2016

Delta Sigma Delta is an international dental fraternity that values ethical, professional, and academic excellence. Our “Omicron Omicron” chapter at VCU School of Dentistry was established on December 16th, 1931; since then, the fraternity has been recruiting bright and talented individuals and offering its members fellowship, educational, and service opportunities. Today, our fraternity consists of members that are actively involved in various aspects of dentistry. Many members hold officer positions in VCU ASDA and SGC, serve as project leaders for the Mission of Mercy Projects, and partake in research in different fields of dentistry. In addition, DSD members founded three new student organizations (American Association of Public Health Dentistry, Hispanic Dental Association, and Student Chapter of American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry) this semester. The tradition of bringing together quality individuals continues this year as we welcome a group of unique and well-rounded new members.



After hosting several exciting events, including the Polo Potluck at King Family Vineyard in Charlottesville and a trivia night at Triple Crossing Brewery, we recruited new members whose talents extend far beyond service and dentistry.

Among the new recruits, there are scoutmasters, a step team leader, musicians, and athletes excelling in competitive figure skating, wrestling, and swimming, to name a few.

At the end of October, members gathered for the Pumpkins & Pints event and had a great time enjoying fall treats and flaunting some pumpkin-carving skills. In the upcoming couple of months, we are looking forward to fun activities including the annual Thanksgiving Dinner and an inter-fraternity ski trip with Psi-O. DSD is thankful for the great semester so far and is excited to share with the new members another eventful semester to come!



Top Left: Trivia Night at Triple Crossing Brewery

Top Right: First Years at initiation in November

Left: Getting ready for Halloween with Pumpkins & Pints



Alyssa Gutierrez, D2017

The Hispanic population in Virginia is continually growing. As aspiring dental professionals, we desire to connect with each of our patients in order to serve them in the best way possible. The ability to effectively communicate with Hispanic patients has been an ongoing concern at our school. Our vision and goal in founding a Hispanic Dental Society (HDA) chapter at VCU is to help make students more capable, comfortable, and confident while treating Hispanic patients.



We want to inspire our student body to reach out to the Hispanic community, educating them and advocating for them. At the same time, we hope this will also help us all get a better understanding of the Hispanic culture, allowing us to more effectively relate to and treat Hispanic patients. We have held three Spanish Language Work-

shops thus far, created workbooks for our members, and hosted two treatment planning seminars given in Spanish. We also held our first social where members attended a Latin Dance Class and had dinner at Plaza Azteca where we practiced our Spanish as we ordered our delicious food! Members also volunteer at The Impressions Program hosted by the SNDA this year. These events have been a huge success, and we currently have 60 active members in our brand new chapter. The

numbers are continually growing as the word spreads of the personal benefits our members constantly express. We are thrilled by the support we have received from our peers, faculty, and administration, and we are very excited about the future of the HDA Chapter at VCU.



Above: HDA members spend their Saturday morning helping with SNDA Impressions Day



HDA Exec: (front) Daliliah Romero, Chandani Desai, Farren Billue, Jen Tran, Sheyda Maghsoudi (back) Russell Powell, Courtney Killough, Brandon McCullough, Alyssa Gutierrez, Nicolas Gallegos



Right: Chezdán Baker (D2017) helps a pre-dental student take impressions

D2: The Struggle is Real

D2 year is no joke. Whether you've experienced it first-hand, are counting down the days until it's over, or dreading the day that it begins, no amount of sympathy can begin to be expressed for those currently going through the roughest academic year in dental school. Let's check in with a couple of our current second year students to see if they have managed to keep their sanity mid-way through the year...

Brittany Field, D2017

We've all heard it a million times: "D2 year is hard." Whether you've been warned by upperclassmen, are currently living through it one day at a time, or have survived to tell the tale; I'll be the first to tell you it's the truth. As a former D.5 student, I had definitely heard about the woes of D2 year and thought I was plenty prepared for what was ahead. Boy, was I wrong. I had no idea D2 year was going to hit me like a big yellow school bus.



Brittany takes a clean impression of classmate, Elizabeth Dixon

year and coffee was going to be my new best friend.

The second struggle of D2 year hit me around September. As D.5's we had already taken two of the D1 classes each semester, so we had extra time throughout the week that I usually wound up using to cram for an exam I inevitably procrastinated studying for. Suddenly, I had to find a way to deal with not having that anymore and the transition didn't go so smoothly. Between hours of lecture, lab work that I was somehow always behind on, and endless assignments and quizzes, I was exhausted (see D2 struggle #1). It was hard to train myself to stay awake and study at the end of a long school day, but somehow I found a way to make it work (more coffee). It only took a few exam grade casualties to figure it out.

Third D2 struggle: I'm going to be making a lot of trips to the Schein Store. I learned my lesson the hard way after not practicing anywhere near enough for that first

That first week I remember thinking, "well this sure isn't D1 year anymore," while trying to simply figure out where I had to be and wondering how on earth I was ever going to survive our 8-5 schedule. That's when the first D2 struggle hit me: I was going to be very tired for the next

fixed practical, and since then have been spending increasing amounts of quality time in new my favorite place: Woolwine. Lots of practice inevitably requires lots of teeth, so I've been working on a nice little collection of those manila coin envelopes. The worst part isn't even having to ask for an embarrassing number of teeth, it's getting stuck in the basement waiting for those elevators to come rescue you.

So the D2 struggle is real, but I promise it's not all bad. The camaraderie that comes from spending hours upon hours in our second home, Lyons 443, is something our class will only get to experience this year. Despite all the stress and frustrations that come with our crazy schedule, we get a unique opportunity to bond as a class before our D3 and D4 schedules take us all in different directions. All we can do is take it one day at a time and before we know it, we'll have survived D2 year too.



Evan Garrison and Grant Throckmorton prove that laughter is the best medicine when it comes to long hours in the library

The Art of Failure

Ian Robinson, D2017



So here we are, in the middle of our D2 year: a year that is shaping up to be one of the most stressful, most demanding, most overwhelming periods of our lives. During one of my darker times this semester, after failing a fixed practical due to an undercut, I turned to one of my favorite books for some perspective and encouragement. Art & Fear was written by two photography professors whose reflections on their careers can apply to any artistic field, including the practice of dentistry. Thumbing through its hundred or so pages, I came across a sentence that seemed particularly relevant at the time: “The seeds of your next work lie embedded in the imperfections of your current piece.”

Becoming painfully aware of our shortcomings, or learning to accept failure as a necessary part of the process, is one of the most difficult aspects of dental school. Having a critical error is one of the most devastating and soul-crushing defeats one can suffer in dental school. It can be all too easy to discount all those hours of work leading up to the practical, all those \$2.15 acrylic teeth sacrificed in the name of progress,

as a disappointing waste of time and energy. Such narrow-minded thinking completely disregards the spectrum of the whole unfolding process. We’re at a point where luck, whether good or bad, plays a disproportionately large role in any given performance. Even though it seems so intense for us right now, dental school will end up being only a small slice of our lives and careers. Here in the present we have to do our part to embrace our failures, because we learn from our 2’s in a qualitatively different way than we learn from our 3’s, 4’s, or even 5’s. Our failures force us to critically reassess our entire approach. They challenge and inspire us in a fundamental way, to cut even more crown preps with a deeper intensity and renewed focus.

As I continued flipping through the pages, I came to a chapter about the long journey towards mastering the skills associated with one’s art. There’s this Zen-like story about a ceramics teacher who divides his class in half, instructing half the students to turn in just one finished piece at the end of the semester and the other half to turn in as many pieces as possible. He explains to each half that their final grades will be based on either quality or quantity, respectively. At the end of the semester, the ones who turned in the dozens and doz-

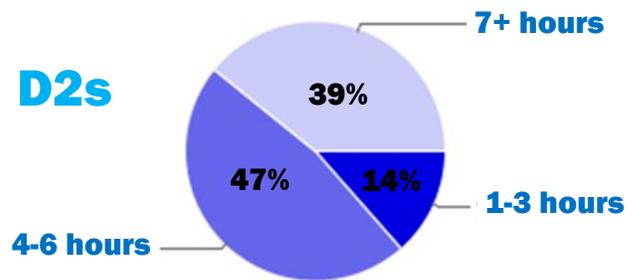
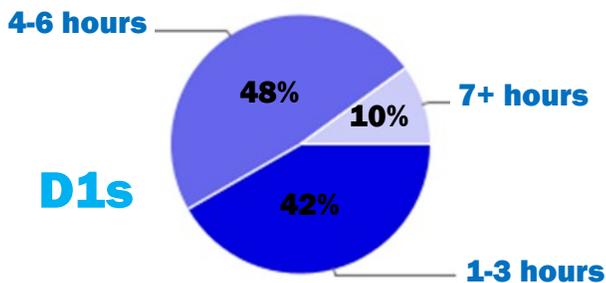
ens of works come out with the highest quality pieces. “It seems that while the ‘quantity’ group was busily churning out piles of work – and learning from their mistakes – the ‘quality’ group had sat theorizing about perfection, and in the end had little more to show for their efforts than grandiose theories and a pile of dead clay.” Even at this early stage in our training, we can look back on our first DentSim preps and laugh at how embarrassingly bad they are. I think about how far my operative skills have developed in just over a year, thanks to all those long hours spent in the Woolwine lab, listening to Pink Floyd’s Dark Side of the Moon over and over again, churning out Class 1’s, Class V’s, and everything in between. I think about all the small victories along the way: not hitting the adjacent tooth for the first time, learning through trial and error which instruments work best for carving anatomy in amalgam, etc. Even though my skills are far beneath where they’ll be a decade from now, I feel more confident and excited about entering clinic than I could’ve imagined.

“For most artists, making good art depends upon making lots of art. Artists get better by sharpening their skills or by acquiring new ones; they get better by learning to work, and by learning from their work.”

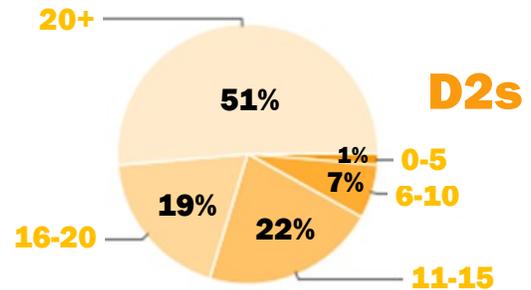
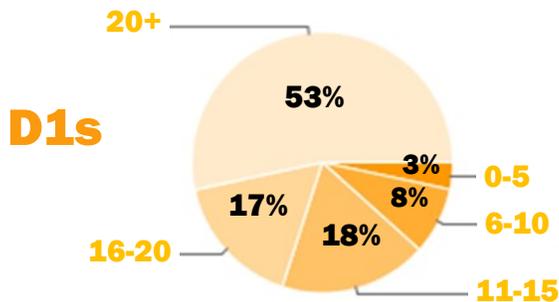
Just how real is the struggle?

In an attempt to see if and how much life inside and outside of school can change between first and second year, D1s and D2s were polled about their school habits and daily struggles...

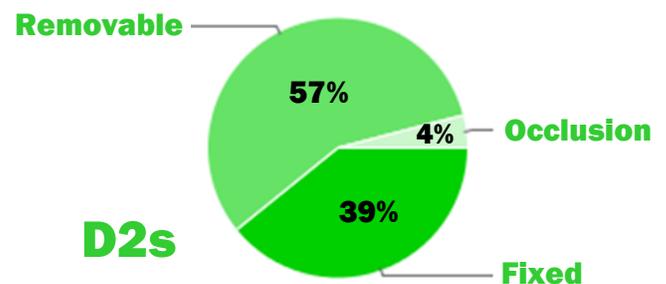
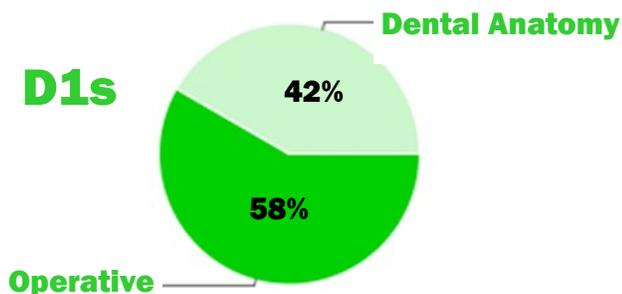
Longest you've spent in Woolwine on a non-school day?



How many teeth have you bought so far this year?



What is your favorite lab class?



Average number of practice preps before a practical ...

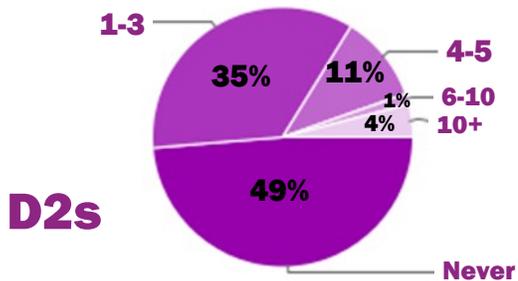
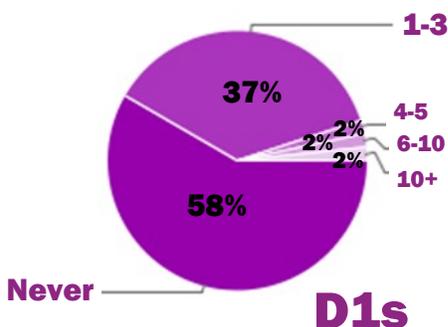
D1s: 5.8

D2s: 5.4

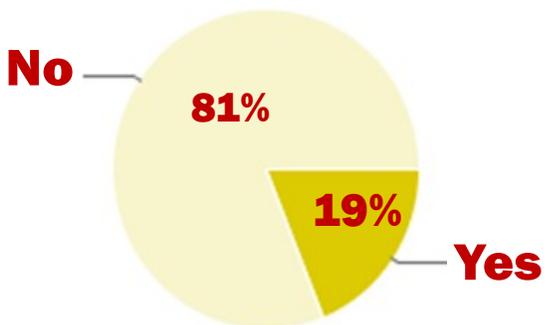


Jen Tran tries to stay comfortable while studying in the library

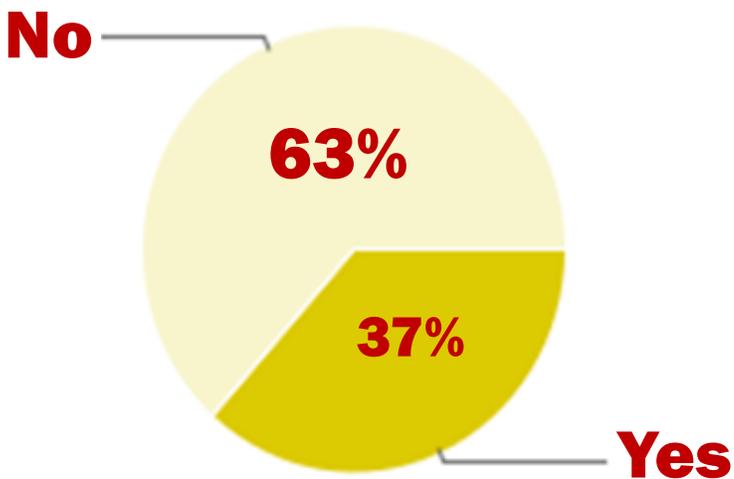
How many times a week do you fall asleep in class?



D2s, have you done your first operative in clinic yet?



D1s, do you know the name of your GPG leader? (without checking)



Dentistry: Beyond the Operator and Inside the Legislature

Dani Howell, D2017



With a New Year looming, dentistry is looking at an exciting start in Congress. When the session begins in January, with the addition of Freshman Congressman, Brian Babin, a total of three member dentists will serve in the House of Representatives. Dr. Babin, representing Texas' 36th district will join Dr. Mike Simpson (Idaho) and Dr. Paul Gosar (Arizona) in Washington. Having three member dentists in Congress is both exciting and beneficial to the dental profession.

Currently the Virginia State Legislature houses many different professions in its legislators, but dentistry remains unrepresented. However, there is hope in a special election to be held on December 9th that Virginia will have a dentist serving in the legislature. Todd Pillion, a pediatric dentist in southwest Virginia, is running for an open seat in the House of Representatives. Regardless of the results of the special election, both the House and the Senate of Virginia are controlled by the Republi-

can Party with the Democrat Governor McAuliffe controlling the executive branch.

The General Assembly is scheduled to meet for a short session beginning January 14, 2015. The short session is scheduled for 30 days with an option to extend for 30 additional days as needed. Virginia, like the majority of the states in the nation, is a part time legislature with alternating short and long sessions; short sessions occur in odd number years and long sessions correspond with the Governor's budget, taking place in even years.

Several dentists and dental students will have the opportunity to meet with legislators during the session on January 16, 2015 when the Virginia Dental Association hosts the annual Day on the Hill.

ELECTION UPDATE

Dr. Todd Pillion was elected on December 9th and will represent Virginia's 4th House of Delegates District

What is ADPAC?

ADPAC is the American Dental Political Action Committee. The primary mission of ADPAC is to aid and advance pro-dentistry legislation and candidates regardless of party lines.

More importantly, ADPAC serves to represent the ADA as the voice of oral health care. The successes of ADA Members in their contributions to ADPAC lead the Wall Street Journal to name ADPAC as the back to watch.

Why should I be a part of ADPAC?

Dentistry is governed by laws, statues, and regulations. The majority of these are laws and regulations are created by individuals with no knowledge of dentistry and its practice. ADPAC allows the ADA to allocate resources to educate and inform legislators on appropriate actions to protect our patients and our profession as a whole.

How do I join ADPAC?

It's easy! As your Legislative Liaison, I can help! Find me, fill out a form with payment information, and you are an ADPAC member. Student membership has two levels—basic membership (\$5) and Capitol Club membership (\$50).

I am in dental school, why should I care what is going on in the General Assembly?

The happenings in the General Assembly are what contribute to our future. The legislation made today has significant impact on the way the practice of dentistry and the successes of small business owners in the future.

How do I let legislators know what is important to me?

ASDA makes this easy, [ASDA Engage](#) is simple- it allows you to in about 15 seconds send a letter to your legislators on key issues impacting students and the dental profession. Current issues? Student Debt, Mid-Level Providers, and providing funding for underserved medically compromised patients.

Why students participate in Day on the Hill

“Every year, legislation that can make a profound impact on our practice comes across their desk. Without the participation of dentists and students they would vote without meeting the people who will feel the greatest effect of their decision.”

– Chris Wolberg, D2016



“Meeting with our state legislators and educating them about important issues in dentistry is critical for public health and the future of our profession. It is great to experience how accessible our legislators are and how eager they are to learn what dentistry can do for our State.”

– Eric Bokinsky, D2016



“My favorite part of Day on the Hill was working with my future dental colleagues to show Virginia’s political leaders our passion for keeping our profession strong.”

– Amy Reichert, D2016



ADPAC 
American Dental Political Action Committee

JANUARY 12-16, 2015

ADPAC Week Events:

ADPAC Breakfast—Come join ADPAC and get breakfast a few days throughout the week.

Pizza and Politics—Lunch and Learn, Hear about ADPAC and participate in a Q&A about politics and policy and how they relate to dentistry

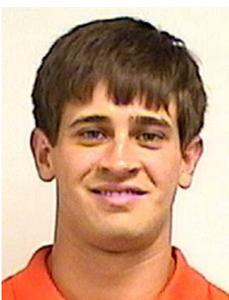
Red, White, and Brews— Have a chance to unwind from the stresses of clinic and Woolwine and attend the Legislation Brief in preparation for General Assembly visits on Friday.

VDA Day on the Hill— Network with dentists throughout the state, learn about legislation related to dentistry, and meet with your state legislators.



2014 ASDA National Leadership Conference

Connor McCall, D2018



ASDA's National Leadership Conference is not just about seeing who has the highest "ASDA Fever", admiring the Texas dental student's confidence to wear a cowboy hat in any situation, or explaining to Chicagoans that there is an "actual" conference for dental students to collaborate from across the nation.

Come on, people. All kidding aside, I was very fortunate to attend this event as a first year student and listen to those who will be confronting issues which will transcend our profession for generations to come. Rest assured, they are some of the best and brightest, and we should all be very excited for our futures and what's in store.

Each day began with breakfast, then we quickly moved to a conference room where a keynote speaker gave a talk. These were people who have accomplished extraordinary things without extraordinary abilities. Our six representatives then broke out into sessions that continued until lunch. Topics ranged from advocacy in dentistry to how to better run a dental practice, with each representative attending sessions that corresponded to their year and role in ASDA. Residency and post-graduate advice was the target for upperclassmen, and more school /ASDA leadership focus for underclassman. After networking through lunch, we then continued this schedule until five. After a quick change, we continued the night with dinner and discussions with other stu-

dents on what works for their respective ASDA chapters. The days started at 6 AM and wrapped up around 11PM with no downtime. The amount of planning involved with the NLC was very evident in the amount of information given in such a short period of time.

I'll admit, at first, I declined the opportunity to attend NLC. But upon further investigation, the chance seemed worth missing a day of class and a weekend of studying. If you ever get the opportunity, go to this event. You will not be disappointed. Even though I was not successful in climbing Chicago's giant silver bean, the experience was one I will never forget and hope to return to in the future. So no matter the level, I encourage all to seek the opportunities available through ASDA. Learn more about an organization whose main focus is helping you become the best student by informing you on today's dentistry in the most efficient way possible.

Right: Isaac Goode (D2017), Dani Howell (D2017), Anna Pitz (D2016), Kayla Roe (D2018), and Connor McCall (D2018) visit "The Bean" before leaving Chicago



Quick Bites: Homemade Granola Bars

Sheila Daniels, D2015



This month it seems I've spent more time in an airport, on a train, or in the car than actually at the dental school. As someone who's used

to change the flavor (the picture here shows an apricot/crystallized ginger combo). My favorite spice to add is cardamom, a Middle Eastern spice similar to cinnamon but a bit spicier. You can actually find it at any grocery store so keep your eyes open and happy baking!

to preparing all their meals from scratch, eating on the road makes me feel incredibly unhealthy, tired, and slow. So I've started experimenting with homemade granola bars to keep my energy up and my tummy full while rushing between connecting flights. These are very simple to make, as you'll see, and there are lots of ways



Homemade Granola Bars

What you Need:

- 2 cups oats
- 1/2 cup corn flakes
- 1/2 cup canola or grapeseed oil
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 tsp cardamon
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 cup chopped dates
- 1/2 cup banana chips, crushed
- 1/2 cup dried apricots
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/2 cup brown sugar plus 2 or 3 tsp white sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 Tsp agave syrup

What you Do:

Mix all the "dries" together - minus the mix-ins (dates, apricots, banana chips). Then add the wet stuffs.

The consistency should still be malleable but not too runny, so continue adding either oatmeal or corn flakes (bran flakes might be a nice addition instead) until you reach a consistency that is a little looser than cookie dough.

Bake the mixture - after pouring into a well-buttered Pyrex - at 350 degrees for 35 minutes or until golden brown.

Let stand about 10 minutes, then, while still warm, cut into squares.

Take out of the dish and let cool completely before wrapping in parchment paper or plastic wrap. These will keep easily for two weeks.

Highlights from the Semester



Kristin Edwards and Deidre Smith, D2016, did a fabulous job of planning Dental Ball 2014



Anna Pitz, (D2016), Stephen Legg (M2017), Holly Todd, Jennifer Tummarello, Helen Pham, Alexis Diaczynsky, and Amy Reichert (all D2016) complete the Richmond Half Marathon in the freezing cold



Alyssa Franklin (D2017) finishes her first half marathon, the Richmond Half, as Leslie Arthur cheers her on



Students at the 2014 Virginia Meeting attend the Caribbean-themed President's Party



Third year students hang out and enjoy some barbeque at the Annual ASDA Back to School BBQ



Tommy Duong (D2016) takes down Dean Sarrett in the dunk tank at the Back to School BBQ



D2 ladies take a break from wearing scrubs to get dolled up for the Dental Ball at Tredegar Iron Works



Virginia Commonwealth University
American Student Dental Association



Please submit and stories, questions, comments, or concerns to Anna Pitz at pitzae@vcu.edu