

Fall 2019

## Lasting Impressions College of Dental Medicine

Nova Southeastern University

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NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

# Impressions

FALL/WINTER 2019 COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE



## Tips for Starting a Practice



# CDM salutes its alumni

who are serving their communities  
around the world.



**NSU**  
Florida

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Contact Rosalie Marin at [rosalie.marin@nova.edu](mailto:rosalie.marin@nova.edu) for information.

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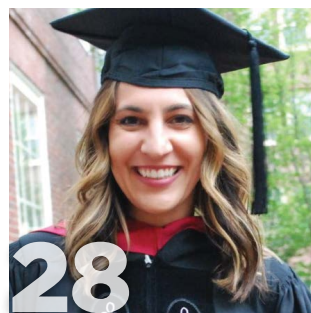
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# Impressions

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## Message from the Interim Dean



Greetings Friends and Colleagues,

I am thrilled to provide my first introduction in this issue of *Impressions*. As the interim dean of NSU's College of Dental Medicine (CDM), I could not be more honored to serve our college. Many of you have expressed excitement about our future. Together, we are already hard

at work on many initiatives—including a comprehensive digital dentistry program, unprecedented growth in our research efforts, a major curriculum realignment, development of a five-year strategic vision, and the empowerment of the student voice in the success of our college.

This edition of *Impressions* shows how the CDM is achieving its continual steep, upward trajectory in research, teaching, and service. Various faculty members representing the diverse talent and commitment that are hallmarks of our college are also highlighted. Their dedication to educating our students, both in the classroom and in our clinics, is unparalleled.

Also featured in this edition are our premiere researchers working in the state-of-the-art Center for Collaborative Research. Their groundbreaking bench research is being translated into active clinical practice intended to improve the human condition and make a true difference in patients' lives.

It is my sincere hope that this issue of *Impressions* will provide you with the opportunity to gain insight into the CDM's distinguishing characteristics—as well as its growth, pride, and vision. Together, we can shape the future of the College of Dental Medicine.

GO SHARKS!

Steven I. Kaltman, D.M.D., M.D., FACS  
Interim Dean and Professor  
College of Dental Medicine  
Nova Southeastern University

# MESSAGE from the Chancellor



Nova Southeastern University's Health Professions Division (NSU-HPD) is in the midst of an exciting phase of ongoing development. However, it is important to remember that an incredible visionary named Morton Terry, D.O., who was the founder of the NSU-HPD, planted the seeds of this evolution.

He believed that health care was going to become increasingly scrutinized by the people of this nation. He also saw that health care was going to evolve into a collegial and collaborative professional venture in both the private and public sectors.

Why am I bringing this topic up at this time? We recently opened the Tampa Bay Regional Campus in Clearwater, Florida, which is one of the

most highly advanced instructive sites in the United States. The first cohort of students began attending classes in August 2019 at this campus, which offers the most progressive pedagogy and technology possible.

The Tampa Bay Regional Campus houses an additional site for NSU's Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine, which is the original school of the Health Professions Division. We also have the Dr. Pallavi Patel College of Health Care Sciences and the Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing represented at this facility. These colleges stand alongside each other, not as separate programs or separate schools, but as collaborative and collegial health education entities.

This is exactly what Dr. Terry envisioned many years ago. He always said that health professionals, such as physicians, pharmacists, optometrists, dentists, nurses, and physician assistants, needed to work together as a cohesive team. He also said that in order for us to respect each other, we needed to learn together.

Fortunately, that philosophy is on full display at the Health Professions Division. This attitude extends to the NSU campuses in Fort Lauderdale/Davie, Fort Myers, Jacksonville, Miami, Miramar, Orlando, and Palm Beach, as well as at our Puerto Rico Regional Campus and the new Tampa Bay Regional Campus. Dr. Terry's view, which became my mantra when I succeeded him as HPD chancellor, was that we must always respect one another.

As I mentioned, we are not just a specific school or a specific program. We are One NSU. That was Dr. Terry's belief, and we have carried his vision forward since he passed away in 2004.

Congratulations to everyone who has participated in our growth and success. Thanks to the commitment of so many dedicated and talented people, NSU-HPD's future is brighter than ever.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Frederick Lippman".

Frederick Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D.  
Chancellor, Special Projects  
Health Professions Division





## TIPS FOR STARTING A PRACTICE

After you've earned your dental degree, what's next? The American Dental Association (ADA) states that, based on its research, two-thirds of recent dental school graduates seek employment either as an associate in a private practice or working in one of the larger corporate group offices.

So, what goes into the business of dentistry and is it for you? Several NSU College of Dental Medicine (CDM) alumni were able to offer their insights.

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*Top: Michael Roseff takes a brief break at his pediatric practice.*

*Above: Jason E. Portnof works on a patient.*

*Right: Kelly Cundy Hart and Trevor Hart open their practice.*



(continued from page 4)

## **JASON E. PORTNOF, M.D., D.M.D. ('02)**

### **Surgical Arts of Boca Raton | Boca Raton, Florida**

Jason E. Portnof spent 12 years studying the ins and outs of owning an oral surgery practice during 2 years in a private practice “decades ago,” and 10 years in academics as a CDM faculty member.

For Portnof, opening a specialty office for oral and maxillofacial surgery “just kind of evolved. I didn’t have my sights set on it,” he said. “I always thought that, one day, I would open my own practice, but it had to be the right place and opportunity, and it sort of all came together.”

**“I kept in touch with everyone over the years, and when I was ready, I brought them on to join me in my office. You keep those relationships going, and then you have people who you trust and know their work ethic.”**

—JASON E. PORTNOF

Portnof said he spent time researching and learning to find the site that met his exact requirements. Since his specialty is oral and maxillofacial surgery, he wanted to be on a hospital campus (the office is near West Boca Medical Center) with a certain amount of square footage, and he wanted to have two operating rooms where he could provide general anesthesia services. “I looked at articles in *Dental Economics* magazine, I read books, I researched the business side, I talked with colleagues, and I surrounded myself with smart people who gave me guidance,” he said.

He became an anesthesia inspector for the Florida Board of Dentistry. “I did that to make sure when I was building out the operating rooms that I met the Board of Dentistry’s requirements to perform general anesthesia in my office,” he explained.

Portnof also hired staff members with whom he had worked in the past. “I kept in touch with everyone over the years, and when I was ready, I brought them on to join me in my office. You keep those relationships going, and then you have people who you trust and know their work ethic,” he said.

Surgical Arts of Boca Raton opened in December 2018. As the practice grows, he’ll hire an associate, who he hopes will eventually become a partner.

## **MICHAEL ROSEFF, D.M.D. ('04)**

### **Roseff Pediatric Dentistry | Boynton Beach, Florida**

Michael Roseff worked for a few corporate dental companies as a pediatric specialist before opening his specialty office. He said the learning experiences he gained working for those companies were invaluable when opening his own office.

“When you come out of dental school, you may practice differently than you will three years later,” Roseff said. “If I built my office as soon as I got out of dental school, it would have been completely different. Working for a while for someone else, I figured out the way I like to work.”

Roseff said building an office is about developing the right flow. “How patients come in and out, sterilization, and X-rays—everything has to have a flow to it. Learn how you like to practice when working for someone else, and then you will know how to build your office in a way that’s comfortable for you.”

He opened his private pediatric specialty office 10 years ago and said demographics played a role in the location he chose. “From Miami up to Jupiter is

**“If I built my office as soon as I got out of dental school, it would have been completely different. Working for a while for someone else, I figured out the way I like to work.”**

—MICHAEL ROSEFF

saturated with dentists, so the location I found was in a newer area. The space was new, giving me the opportunity to build out the office the way I wanted.”

He also found an area filled with families who would, most likely, seek a specialist.

Challenges are part of owning your own business, he said. “The dentistry is the easiest part, because that’s where our expertise is. Probably 75 percent of the stress is from the business side. Having someone call in sick at 6:00 a.m., and then you are short staffed, or equipment breaks down,” said Roseff, who has a staff of nine and an associate who works one day a week.

For Roseff, the upside to having his own practice is being able to decide how he wants his office to function. “When you work for some of the corporations, you can’t use certain materials, or you need to use a certain lab, or there isn’t the equipment you might want. When you work for yourself, you can make the decisions you want, and not just with staffing and hours, but with everything in dentistry.”

#### **KELLY CUNDY HART, D.M.D. (’16) AND TREVOR HART, D.M.D. (’16)**

##### **Hart to Hart Dental | Oakland Park, Florida**

Trevor Hart and Kelly Cundy knew soon after they met on the first day of dental school that they would one day be married and open their own practice. After graduation, Trevor Hart worked at corporate offices, while Kelly Cundy worked as an associate in pediatrics in a private practice. They were married in 2018.

Cundy Hart specializes in pediatrics, while Hart’s focus is general dentistry. “None of it, however, was an overnight decision,” he said.

“Having gone through dental school together, the rigors of 40 credit hours our first year, and then living together, after going through all that, we knew we could run a practice together,” Cundy Hart said.

After graduating, Hart worked in Estero, Florida, as an associate in a corporate dental group and then moved into his own practice. “It was probably three months into working there, and I was the only doctor at that office,” he said.

*(continued on page 8)*

# Before You Get Started



## **BUDGET**

Total dental start-up costs can range from \$350,000 to \$500,000, with an average start-up cost of \$475,000. Find a lender experienced in the industry who understands the needs of a dental practice, and not just one who is a generalist in small-business lending.

## **LOCATION**

Research the market to see where there is the least amount of saturation of practitioners who offer the same services. Also, is the location accessible?



## **STAFFING**

How many people can you employ? Think beyond salary, too, and consider health insurance, time off, and other benefits you’ll need to provide to staff members.

## **LICENSING AND LEGAL**

Don’t wait until the last minute to know about the licensing and legal aspects of opening a practice. Some credentials can take months, especially when it comes to accepting insurances.



(Some information from *Dental Economics* magazine)



# Dental Economics



(continued from page 7)

“The doctor who owned the company wanted his main practitioners to understand the KPIs (key performance indicators) of the practice, so every month, the regional manager, the office manager, and I would sit down and go over what went well, things we could improve upon, and ways we could save some money,” he added. “That was extremely beneficial.”

**“Being an associate, that’s not a realistic end goal to financial success. So which path do you want to take? Do you want to join a practice that you can eventually buy out or jump right in? The best way to get that financial freedom is through your own business.”**

—KELLY CUNDY HART

They always knew they wanted to own their own practice, but things moved quickly when they married, and both were living in South Florida. “He didn’t want to work for anyone else, and I thought I would stay working where I was, but also work part time for us. But, the pieces fell into place,” Cundy Hart said.

They also explored buying out a practice. “Everything we looked at had outdated equipment, or an old layout, or the rooms seemed cramped. I wanted it to be all ours, and that we could do our own design work. For us to say, ‘This is how we want our practice to look and feel and run,’ and getting our own space, we were able to do that,” Hart said.

Although they both have debt from dental school, and from building their business, they believe it was better to start sooner rather than later.

“Being an associate, that’s not a realistic end goal to financial success. So which path do you want to take? Do you want to join a practice that you can eventually buy out or jump right in? The best way to get that financial freedom is through your own business,” Cundy Hart said.

# Sharpening Your Business Acumen

She read Facebook groups and listened to podcasts about the downside of taking over an existing office. Although these came with a client base, it took time for an office to switch gears. “The patients and the staff members are used to it running one way, and that takes time to change,” she said.

After commissioning a demographic study to figure out who their ideal patient was, and the groups of patients they wanted, the couple narrowed down their patient population. “Where was the growth? We wanted to be near Fort Lauderdale, but if you go down Commercial Boulevard, there is a dentist on every corner. We wanted to be away from that,” Hart said.

They found an “empty shell of a building” in an up-and-coming location in Oakland Park. “The city really wants to invest in this area. They have been extremely helpful in getting our name out,” said Cundy Hart. Their practice, Hart to Hart Dental, opened in June 2019.

The space they found has a vacancy next door. As their practice grows, they are hoping to have combined, but separate, offices. “Our unique feature will be to basically have two practices under one roof. For patients who are just coming for general dentistry, they come in on the side where we are now. The children and a family could come in the other side. And the adults and kids could be seen at the same time,” Hart said.

Currently, the office offers pediatrics on Monday, Wednesday, and half days on Friday and general dentistry on Tuesday and Thursday. They share a dental assistant and a front office administrator for now. “Everyone, including us, wears a lot of hats,” Hart said.

## COMMON GOALS

Despite these alumni’s different experiences opening their own businesses, they all share common goals—to thrive through autonomy, with the result being best practices in patient care. They agree that their higher education at NSU CDM taught them how to be the best in their field, and the real world was where they learned the basics of dental economics. ♦

## DID YOU KNOW?

- You can earn a D.M.D./M.B.A. dual degree from NSU, which will arm you with management principles to pursue your own private practice.
- NSU can also help you learn to navigate legal and financial aspects of entrepreneurship with evening classes leading to a certificate.
- An Introductory to Entrepreneurship course is also available.
- NSU’s H. Wayne Huizenga College of Business and Entrepreneurship offers additional courses illustrating
  - how to get a business up and running
  - business law
  - employment law
  - real estate law



## TWO TIPS FROM TWOROGER

BY TOM TWOROGER, D.B.A., PROFESSOR  
AND CHAIR OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT  
THE HUIZENGA COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

- It’s good for dentists to have business law and employment law under their belts, so they don’t have to call an attorney each time they have to sign a contract or negotiate a lease for equipment, for instance.
- Those going into private dental practice should want to own their property and lease it back to their business. If, someday, they’d like to sell that practice, they can lease the property to the new owner. And then, someday, they sell the property. Now, they’ve sold their business twice.



# TO THE MAX



## CONTINUING EDUCATION WIRED FOR LEARNING

BY MICHELLE F. SOLOMON

In a surgery room at NSU's College of Dental Medicine (CDM), one camera peers down on the procedure area, while a secondary camera is set up through a microscope. The instructor-surgeon wears a lavalier microphone to explain each surgery phase.

A few feet away, in the Dental Simulation Laboratory, 35 dental professionals watch the implant procedure being broadcast in real time on their own 22-inch monitor. The participants in the sim lab can interact with the surgery room through two-way microphones.

On any given day, two to four such sessions are held simultaneously as part of the CDM's Continuing Education (CE) Program. "Rather than watching a PowerPoint or a video on a screen, they watch a procedure live. They are not sitting in a lecture hall staring at one giant screen," explained Joel B. Slingbaum, D.M.D., director of informational and instructional technology and of continuing education for the CDM.

"The whole room is wired for sound. There is no delay. It is a live demonstration being broadcast, so when the learners ask questions, it is about what is happening in real time," he added.

The livestream, already successful in a few course offerings, is just the beginning for expanding the CE Program. "We're looking to expand more of these live demo courses. We can bring up to 130 people into the lab to watch and learn from a procedure as it is happening," Slingbaum said.

The simultaneous-time broadcast has become one of the modules in the Continuing Education Depart-

ment's American Academy of Implant Dentistry (AAID) MaxiCourse: Practical Implant Education. The 300-hour course is overseen by Jack Piermatti, D.M.D., director of the Dental Implant MaxiCourse at both the CDM and Rutgers University School of Dental Medicine. He also directs dental implant surgery for the CDM's postgraduate prosthodontics residency program. Thomas J. Balshi, D.D.S., Ph.D., a CDM professor, serves as coinstructor/codirector.

"The real-time surgery has two components," Piermatti said. "If I am in the surgery room, Dr. Balshi can be in the sim lab talking participants through what they are watching, and then we trade off."

*"It is a live demonstration being broadcast, so when the learners ask questions, it is about what is happening in real time."*

—JOEL B. SLINGBAUM

### 10-MONTH COURSE

The AAID MaxiCourse®: Practical Implant Education, now in its third year, is the CDM's most ambitious CE program. "The course is a commitment for those who participate," said Piermatti, explaining that the 10-month course meets each Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

(continued on page 13)







*Dental professionals view live procedures broadcast in real time during the CDM's Continuing Education Program.*

(continued from page 10)

One of the AAID's missions is to provide dentists with educational information through annual meetings and conferences. The AAID developed this comprehensive training program concept for implants at Augusta University in Augusta, Georgia. Today, the CDM's implant MaxiCourse® is one of only 14 in North America, along with 5 international MaxiCourses® located in Asia and the Middle East.

According to the AAID, the MaxiCourse® positions participants to become proficient in all aspects of implant dentistry. "If, after the course, they want to take the exam, they can become an associate fellow of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry," Piermatti said.

### DENTAL REMEDIATION AND TELEDENTISTRY

The CDM's CE Program also is expanding and improving its dental remediation offerings. "We are focusing on the quality and quantity of the lectures. And, we are working to provide more services for individuals who are directed, for one reason or another, to complete remediation courses," Slingbaum said.

The CDM has offered the dental profession continuing education remediation courses in the past, but now the department is stepping up its game in the use of teledentistry. Florida requires individuals do their remediation work in person, but in other states, most of the coursework can be done remotely.

For the sessions conducted in person, Slingbaum said participants travel to NSU, where faculty members work with them one-on-one to complete the requirements. He also said the department is reaching out to boards in other states to inform them of the dental remediation courses offered by the CDM.

"Using technology, we now have different abilities to push for other states to recommend us for remediation coursework," Slingbaum said. "And, we are seeing that we are beginning to be recognized beyond Florida."

Courses are also available for other practitioners, such as dental hygienists who need to fulfill CE requirements, and administrative dental office teams that require continuing education courses to deal with business tasks, including legal and billing issues. The hands-on course Photography for the Dental Team covers capturing intraoral photographs and addresses the legal aspects. Another course concentrates on conducting patient questionnaires to estimate dental implant risk assessments.

"These courses are cementing NSU's CDM to the outside world as a leader in continuing education for practitioners and staff members. But, more importantly, we're providing a credible resource for the latest training," Slingbaum said. ♦



## FAST FACTS

### CONTINUING EDUCATION

#### AAID MaxiCourse®

- 10 CE modules
- one three-day weekend per month
- covers beginning to advanced techniques

#### Sessions Include

- tabletop surgery on models
- livestream broadcast of a procedure
- hands-on training with cadavers
- exam prep to become an American Academy of Implant Dentistry associate fellow

#### Additional CDM CE Courses Include

- Legal and Billing Issues
- Intraoral Photography
- Implant Risk Assessments

#### Dental Remediation Courses Include

- Dental Record Keeping
- Diagnosis and Treatment
- Endodontics
- Human Trafficking 101 for Dentists and Dental Professionals
- Implant Placement
- Implant Restoration
- Oral Pathology
- Removable Prosthodontics
- Risk Management
- Teledentistry
- other topics available upon request

#### Advanced Certificates Include

- Preceptorship Program in Endodontics
- Preceptorship Program in Periodontology

For additional information, visit [dental.nova.edu/ce/courses](http://dental.nova.edu/ce/courses).





## DENTAL MISSIONS CLUB OFFERS HEALTH CARE

BY JOHN DOLEN

What makes a student forgo the beach, movies, and friends during summer break and instead go on an unpaid outreach trip to Central America or the Caribbean? The members of the Dental Missions Club at NSU's College of Dental Medicine (CDM) think it's the best way to spend time off.

Fourth-year dental student Melissa Batres was inspired to join the missions club by her experience growing up "in a very small town in El Salvador, very much like the areas we go to in the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica," she said.

While she was taught to brush her teeth, "I didn't know about the real importance of oral health, and there weren't any dentists in the towns nearby. The club gave me the opportunity to change that for other people with similar backgrounds," said Batres, who is the current president of the Dental Missions Club.

Grateful for the chance to become a dentist herself, she said, "I want to use that to give back to others. My first outreach trip definitely showed me that I can give back through dentistry."

And Batres didn't stop there. Her most recent trip, to Costa Rica, was her third, after two trips to the Dominican Republic. In Costa Rica, she was part of a group that included 14 other students and 3 faculty members—Diane Ede-Nichols, D.M.D., M.H.L., M.P.H.; Rashondia W. Gaines, D.D.S., M.S.; and dental hygienist Gilberte Joseph.

"We all worked together so well and helped each other. We really came together as a team and were able to provide quality dental care to 520 patients," said Batres, pointing out that this was done in just four and a half days.

The CDM's Dental Missions Club does three service trips a year. During 2019, members were in the



*Outreach trips teach CDM students the importance of giving back through dentistry and how to work as a team to help patients.*

Dominican Republic in April, Jamaica in June, and Costa Rica in July. The club was formed in 2012, but outreach stretches back to 2001. Batres estimates that, of the 120 students in her graduating class, 60 percent have gone on mission club-sponsored trips.

Through the years, CDM students also have traveled to Nicaragua, Bolivia, and India. Some members also participate in the Florida Dental Association Missions of Mercy at home.

The June trip to Jamaica was the first for third-year student Nekki Soltanian. “Some patients were in so much pain,” she said. “It was a good feeling to get them out of pain. Anything we can do makes such a difference to them.”

The trips are a major commitment for students, who pay all their

own travel expenses and organize fundraisers to pay for equipment and supplies. “You commit yourself for 10 days,” Soltanian said.

On returning, Batres said, “At first, you’re just really exhausted and happy to be able to take a hot shower and sleep in your own bed. But once you get some rest, you start to reflect on this meaningful experience that you just returned from. You meet all these incredible people who live very differently than you. It really makes you think about your life.”

Baha Abuaita, a fourth-year student, went on the Costa Rica trip with Batres. “People came in with swelling and in such pain. And when we could fix things, take away their pain, they were so happy, giving us hugs,” Abuaita said. “Many came to us for the first cleaning in their lives, even some in their 50s. There were patients of all ages.”

#### MISSION CLUB MENTOR

Batres gave much credit for the success of the trips to faculty adviser Diane Ede-Nichols, CDM professor and chair of community and public health sciences. “Dr.

Nichols is an amazing mentor,” Batres said. “She has an immense fountain of knowledge that she loves sharing with her students. I feel extremely lucky to be able to learn from her.”

Does that mean there are more trips in Batres’s future? She gave a big “Yes!” and added, “I want to continue doing outreach trips throughout my career.” Batres said she feels “a sense of contentment and longing” when she returns. “One day, I hope to be able to be on the other side as a teacher and help future students have the same wonderful experiences.”

Perhaps it’s moments like this she’d like to share. “We had a patient with Down syndrome who needed extractions, and she was really anxious,” Batres said. “We worked together to make her feel comfortable, and we were able to do the extractions. “For me, this experience was the epitome of an outreach trip—working as a team in a community that has limited access to care. It was just an incredible moment I will cherish forever.” ♦



# Student Leaders Q&A



Left to right: Karen Nachum,  
Nicole Etcheverry, Patricia  
Reach, and Melissa Batres

**SGA Executive President**

Patricia Reach, Class of 2020  
Hometown: Panama City Beach, Florida

**SGA President-Elect**

Nicole Etcheverry, Class of 2021  
Hometown: Boca Raton, Florida

**SGA Executive Secretary**

Melissa Batres, Class of 2020  
Hometown: New York, New York

**SGA Executive Treasurer**

Karen Nachum, Class of 2020  
Hometown: Davie, Florida

## SGA OFFICERS REFLECT ON THEIR LEGACIES, FUTURE OF DENTISTRY

BY CAROL BRZOZOWSKI

The CDM's Student Government Association (SGA) is composed of 20 students. Each class is represented by a slate of officers who report to a college-wide executive board. Elections are held each March for every position and are open to eligible students in good academic standing who place in the top 50 percent of their class.

In addition to expressing students' concerns to the administration and faculty members, the SGA oversees all of the CDM clubs and bylaws compliance, handles school-wide matters, and shares news about CDM activities at the monthly PanSGA board meetings. Members of this year's executive board each said they chose NSU's CDM for its supportive "family" atmosphere, devoted faculty, quality patient care, and community service.

"As soon as I stepped onto campus, I was greeted with so many smiles and kind words from other students saying, 'Good luck with your interview' or 'You're going to rock it, don't be nervous,'" said Patricia Reach, the SGA's first female executive president. "The welcoming vibe I received on campus that first day four years ago has not changed. We truly are one big Shark family here, which has led to everyone having the chance to succeed to their fullest potential."

**“Being a part of the SGA helps us make changes during our time here.”**

—PATRICIA REACH

### WHY DID YOU WANT AN SGA ROLE?

**PATRICIA REACH:** I have always enjoyed holding leadership roles—being able to be the voice for a class and create real change. Being strong-willed and organized allowed me to have the time to balance student government and the rigorous course load. Being a part of the SGA helps us make changes during our time here.

**NICOLE ETCHEVERRY:** Because of my devotion to strengthening communication between the faculty members and students. Since my first year, I was eager to serve as a liaison and represent the CDM in the NSU community. My passion to make changes at the university motivated me to become an advocate for students. Since becoming president-elect, I've had the opportunity to work with diverse groups of students, faculty members, and other community members.

**MELISSA BATRES:** I wanted to make sure the student body had a voice and didn't feel invisible. I wanted to be an advocate for student needs and concerns, while helping to find solutions to address those concerns.

**KAREN NACHUM:** I wanted to help our school by facilitating necessary changes that will improve the learning environment for both the students and the faculty members.

*(continued on page 18)*



(continued from page 17)

## WHAT CHANGES DO YOU WANT TO MAKE AT THE CDM?

**REACH:** I have always fought for the students being allowed to have personal physical and mental health days. They were able to implement this change to our policy handbook. A change I would love to see is a left-turn signal at the light turning into our parking garage at the intersection of Southwest 30th Street and Southwest 76th Avenue. The installation of the turn signal would make for a safer and smoother intersection for everyone traveling to school in the morning.

**ETCHEVERRY:** I would like to start a new mentoring program so CDM students can be more connected and helpful to each other. I would like to get several small groups of each year—D1 to D4—to communicate with each other and make the transition into and throughout dental school easier. It can be as simple as telling the group about previous teachers you had and how you studied to having a friendly face to connect to when you shadow in the clinic. This program benefits the incoming D1s and creates connections with students who may be able to assist upperclassmen during board examination or help them find patients who fit clinical requirements.

**BATRES:** I hope to create an atmosphere of transparency between students and administration, so we can work together to improve the college.

**NACHUM:** I'd like to help improve the communication between the students and the faculty members.

**“Embracing technology as an integral part of dental care is key to success in the future of dentistry.”**

—NICOLE ETCHVERRY

**“In dentistry, I have the opportunity to promote and improve dental health through assisting patients in sculpting a healthy smile.”**

—KAREN NACHUM

## WHAT LEGACY DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS?

**REACH:** The knowledge that anyone can become involved and be successful in leadership roles at the CDM through the SGA. I want to be remembered for bringing massive positive changes for our students—and that their voices were truly heard. My biggest achievement so far was implementing a “grandfathering in” solution surrounding the new instrument leasing program. The SGA was successful in getting the classes of 2020, 2021, and 2022 grandfathered into the new instrument leasing program, so they won't have to pay a leasing fee for instruments they had already purchased.

I would love to leave the legacy of being someone helping others as embodied in John Wooden's quote: “You can't live a perfect day until you do something for someone who will never be able to repay you.”

**ETCHEVERRY:** I would like to make a more transparent pathway connecting the students and faculty members. Stronger communication between these groups is essential to facilitating changes that will benefit the NSU community.

**BATRES:** I want to leave a sense of unity and optimism for the future students.

**NACHUM:** I want the SGA to establish a foundation of programs and policies that will continue for years after we graduate, ensuring the sense of community and teamwork I have experienced here will expand and continue.

## WHAT LED YOU INTO DENTISTRY?

**REACH:** Dentistry was a very personal choice for me after seeing the work my own orthodontist and dentist were able to achieve in my mouth to help completely transform my smile and self-esteem. I've always enjoyed the instant gratification of seeing an immediate change in my patients and witnessing their own self-esteem and oral health changes. After my first set of braces went on in fourth grade, I knew I wanted to go into this profession to help more kids and adults achieve these same drastic results in life.

**ETCHEVERRY:** At a very early age, I had two experiences that put me on the track of dentistry and revealed to me the tremendous impact dentists have over their patients' lives. The first was my personal battle with my significantly misaligned teeth, requiring a series of serious orthodontic procedures before age seven. I look back at my pictures before the procedures and see a little girl lacking confidence and afraid to smile.

The second experience was much more traumatic. A friendly game of tag with my older brother turned into a rush to the dentist's office to save his front teeth after he tripped over a backpack and went headfirst into the bedpost. I remember him covering his mouth, and when he removed his hands, his teeth were gone. To this day, his teeth marks remain in the bedpost.

His self-esteem was shattered. It took a long time for my brother to get over this experience. I went with him to the dentist and observed the entire procedure. The dentist's ability to reattach his teeth fascinated me. I was hooked. I love the responsibility, working with patients, and learning. I didn't know it then, but that was the start of what will be a lifelong commitment to the profession.

**BATRES:** It is a career that is gratifying and rewarding. Dentistry serves the community and can change many people's lives by applying medicine and artistic skills.

**NACHUM:** I wanted a profession that combined helping others and being creative. In dentistry, I have the opportunity to promote and improve dental health through assisting patients in sculpting a healthy smile.

**“I wanted to be an advocate for student needs and concerns, while helping to find solutions to address those concerns.”**

—MELISSA BATRES

## WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF DENTISTRY

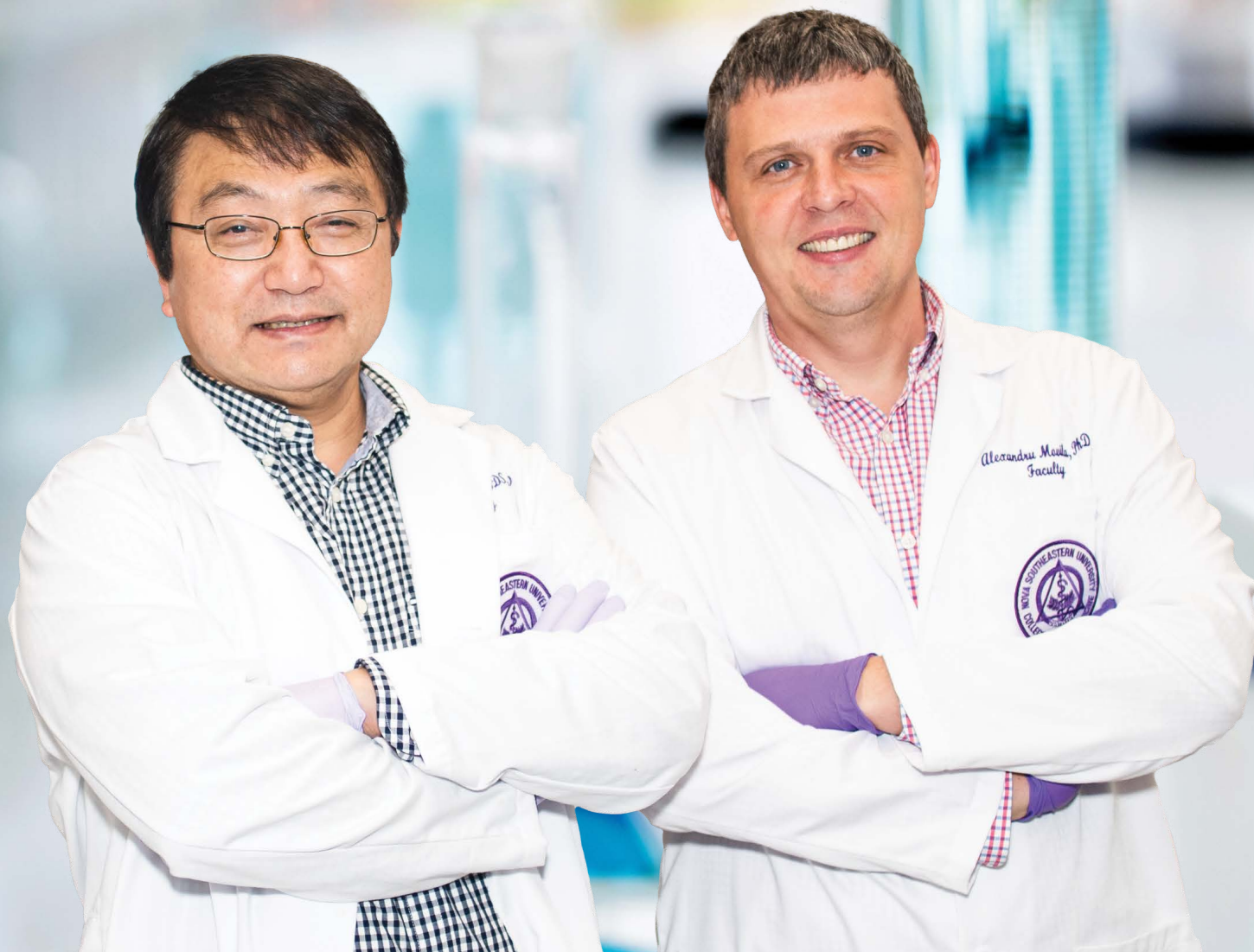
**REACH:** Dentistry is starting to make leaps and bounds into the future with all of the new technology that has come into play. The future of dentistry looks to be more sophisticated—switching alginate impressions to digital scans and microstone models to 3-D printed ones. Even crowns are evolving to be made in office with milling machines vs. sending them out to the lab to be created.

**ETCHEVERRY:** One of the most attractive aspects of the field is that it is constantly evolving. Embracing technology as an integral part of dental care is key to success in the future of dentistry. It is vital to be educated in the latest equipment. Digital dentistry, CAD/CAM (computer-aided design, computer-aided manufacturing), and implants have improved the quality of dental care and product effectiveness.

**BATRES:** With so many technological advancements, the dental field is gaining more understanding of disease progression. Rather than treating disease, dentistry can focus on prevention. By further understanding the progression of disease, dentistry can develop and implement more evidence-based treatments.

**NACHUM:** Dentistry continues to evolve and improve patient care and comfort. Through research and technology, dentistry improves quality of life and aesthetics. ♦





*The research done by Toshihisa Kawai, left, and Alexandru Movila represents another achievement that is increasing the CDM's profile. Photo by Stanley Hack, B.D.S.*

# RESEARCH SENSATION

TWO CDM RESEARCHERS RECEIVE  
MORE THAN \$1 MILLION IN NIH GRANTS

BY MICHELLE F. SOLOMON



When Alexandru Movila, Ph.D., arrived two years ago to be reunited at NSU's College of Dental Medicine (CDM), with his mentor, Toshihisa Kawai, D.D.S., Ph.D., they knew it would help advance the research they began together at the Forsyth Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Between them, they have received more than \$1 million in funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for projects on osteoimmunology in periodontitis, peri-implantitis, periapical periodontitis, and other diseases that develop lytic bone lesions (spots of bone damage that result from cancerous plasma cells building up in bone marrow).

They also received supplemental funds to employ students in their laboratories, specifically minorities identified as underrepresented in the biomedical sciences.

#### **BONE REGENERATION**

According to the NIH, Kawai's research—"Role of Platelets in Periodontal Bone Remodeling"—is relevant to the future of public health. A report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that more than 46 percent of the U.S. population age 30 and older has periodontitis, of which pathogens and the molecular changes in the bone's regenerative response have not been established.

This groundbreaking study will examine the changes of normal mechanical, physical, and biochemical functions caused by platelets in periodontitis and seek to clarify the molecular mechanism that arrests bone regeneration in periodontitis—the gum infection that damages the soft tissue and destroys the bone that supports teeth. Kawai said he hopes his research will lead to developing platelet-based bone regeneration therapy by manipulating the molecular structure of platelets.

#### **AGING POPULATION**

Movila received two NIH grants for his research projects:





“Ceramide-Mediated Pathology in Periodontitis” and “Impact of Aging on Intracellular Ceramide-Mediated Periodontal Bone Lesions.”

According to the NIH, approximately 70 percent of the aging population in the United States, in contrast to 40 percent of young and mid-age population, is affected by some form of periodontal disease leading to bone loss. Movila’s studies will investigate the possible pathogenic role of intracellular ceramide leading to periodontal bone loss.

“So much research about bone loss in aging is focused on osteoporosis, but somehow, people forget about teeth,” Movila said.

The research looks at the impact of aging on periodontal disease on a molecular level and how it is related to periodontal bone loss, he added. The abstract for the second study concludes that there has been a paradigm shift in immunogerontology, suggesting that an alternative, proinflammatory mechanism may be engaged in the age-associated periodontitis.

“Once our hypothesis is tested, we will be well placed to develop a novel therapeutic approach for aging-associated periodontitis,” Movila said.

#### RESEARCH NATION

Through the NIH’s Diversity Research Supplement, Roodelyne Pierrelus, B.S., will work on Kawai’s study for a year. Pierrelus, who earned a Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Neuroscience in 2019 from NSU’s College of Psychology, plans a career in osteopathic medicine and wants to attend NSU’s Dr. Kiran C.

Opposite page: The research by Toshihisa Kawai and Alexandru Movila provides opportunities for students from multiple NSU colleges and disciplines, including (from top left to top right): Niera Algazzaz, a dual-admission student studying biology at NSU's Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography with plans to enter NSU's College of Dental Medicine (CDM); Roodelyn Pierrelus, a B.S. in Behavioral Neuroscience graduate from NSU's College of Psychology with plans to attend NSU-KPCOM; Chiaki Yamada and Keisuke Okubo, both postdoctoral students from Japan studying at NSU's CDM; and Anny Ho, a research technician who will be starting a master's degree program during spring 2020 at NSU's Halmos College.

Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM).

"The college has a reputation for combining research with its medical training," she said. "When I become a physician, I want to understand the research behind my procedures, so I have a complete understanding of medicine." When the 23-year-old learned about the opportunity in Kawai's laboratory, she immediately applied. "The experience working with Dr. Kawai will afford me a more well-rounded view of medicine," she said.

#### UNDERGRADUATE OPPORTUNITY

Movila's grant also is unique in its promise that NSU undergraduate students will have the opportunity to work in biomedical research. Neira Algazzaz, a dual-admission student for dentistry, said working on the research projects as an undergraduate is learning on a "laboratory technical skills postgraduate level."

Algazzaz, who is a junior studying biology with a minor in global engagement, will graduate a year early in May 2020 from NSU's Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography. She then will enter the CDM.

While she had always planned to pursue a D.M.D. degree, Algazzaz also wants to earn a Ph.D. in biological research. "I see myself as a dental scientist in the years to come with the skills I have learned from being guided

by Dr. Movila, and from what I have learned in the laboratory," said Algazzaz, who is part of the Razor's Edge Global Scholars program.

Also working in the lab with Movila is postdoctoral trainee Chiaki Yamada, who came to the CDM from the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Graduate School of Dentistry, Osaka University in Osaka, Japan.

Yamada is engaged in both NIH grant studies, along with a project about age-related peri-implantitis. "We are looking at the placement of the implant abutment as one of the pathogenic causes of peri-implantitis in those ages 65 and older," Yamada said.

The researcher has been working with Movila on the study with funding from the NIH grant, which Movila brought with him in 2017 to the CDM. It was this work that Movila said led to the two new grants. "I hired the trainee for the small grant that I brought to NSU, then from that, we developed some new

data. That work is what helped get these two new grants," Movila added.

The research is another achievement that is increasing the CDM's profile.

"Drs. Kawai and Movila achieved a unique and progressive series of discoveries that rapidly made them one of the CDM's main strengths. Their collaboration and expertise have

**"The college has a reputation for combining research with its medical training. When I become a physician, I want to understand the research behind my procedures, so I have a complete understanding of medicine."**

—ROODELYNE PIERRELUS

resulted in noticeable success that makes us proud," said Sibel A. Antonson, D.D.S., Ph.D., M.B.A., assistant dean for research at the College of Dental Medicine.

"Their additional initiative to continue this momentum by way of training, developing, and investing in the next generation of scientists certainly is inspiring and worthy of commendation," Antonson added. "With their expertise, hard work, and creativity, the College of Dental Medicine is poised to develop the next Center of Excellence in Craniofacial Osteoimmunology." ♦





# GRADUATION 2019

NSU's College of Dental Medicine graduated 126 students in 2019. The following list contains the students' names and plans, if available. Dental studies are Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD), General Practice Residency (GPR), Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMS), Orthodontics (ORTHO), Pediatric Dentistry (PEDS), Periodontics (PERIO), PG Operative Dentistry (OPER. DENT), and Prosthodontics (PROS).

Here are the CDM's newest alumni.

**Ajmal Abed**  
General practice

**Tina Akhavan**  
General practice  
South Florida

**Daniela Alvarez**  
Dental support organization  
Illinois

**Yulissa Alvarez**  
Private practice

**Narges Atabakhsh**  
Pediatric residency at NSU CDM

**Gayane Avakyan**  
Private practice

**Shayan Azimi**  
Private practice  
Dallas, Texas

**Dayron Baez**  
Private practice  
West Palm Beach, Florida

**Rajveer Bal**  
Pediatric dentistry at  
Howard University  
Washington, D.C.

**Greivy Basto**  
Family clinic

**Robert Batdorf**  
One-year OMS internship at  
the University of Texas  
Southwestern Medical Center  
Dallas, Texas

**Alon Bekerman**  
Private practice, South Florida

**Karen Ben-Elazar**  
Pediatric dentistry residency at the  
University of Florida, Naples

**Rachel Blakeley**  
Postdoctoral endodontics program  
at NSU CDM

**Damien Blanco**  
Private practice

**Simone Boutros**  
AEGD program at the Bay Pines VA,  
St. Petersburg, Florida

**Diane Bravo**  
Private practice  
South Florida

**Alyssa Gonzalez Cabanas**  
Associate  
South Florida

**Emeline Calligaris**  
General dentist  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

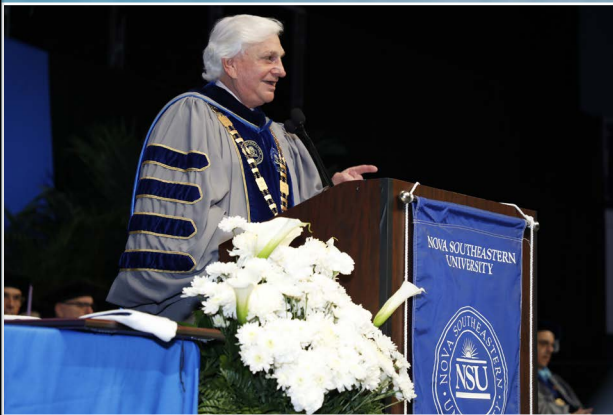
**Nicholas Capp**  
Aspen Dental  
Ohio

**Jaeyeon Cho**  
Private practice  
Texas

**Julia Collazo**  
GPR at Walter Reed Medical  
Center in Bethesda, Maryland,  
serving as an active duty dentist  
with the United States Navy

*(continued on page 26)*









(continued from page 24)

**Kenton Covington**  
Orthodontic residency at  
NSU CDM

**Andres Cruz**  
Corporate practice

**Marisoly Daniel**  
General dentist  
Miami, Florida

**Calogero D'Anna**  
Private practice  
Michigan

**Steven Darley**  
AEGD  
Orlando VA

**Michael DeMarsh**  
Private practice  
Tampa, Florida

**Aashna Deva**  
Private practice

**Kristen Diaz**  
Periodontics resident at  
NSU CDM

**Soallet Diez**  
AEGD

**Gabrielle Edelmann**  
GPR, Marshall University  
West Virginia

**Ahmed Elkoussa**  
Private practice  
Hallandale Beach, Florida

**Eric Enger**  
Private practice, Canada

**Juliana Eslava**  
GPR residency  
New York University, New York

**Michelle Felix**  
Private practice  
Naples, Florida

**Victoria Figueroa**  
General dentist  
Stevens Crossing Dental Care  
St. Cloud, Florida

**Tyler Frey**  
Private practice  
Naples/Fort Myers, Florida

**Cinthia Funes**  
Heartland Dental  
West Palm Beach, Florida

**Marina Gabriel**  
Tampa, Florida

**Luis Gamboa**  
General dentist  
Orlando, Florida

**Giovanni Gonzalez**  
Aspen Dental  
Naples, Florida

**Casey Goss**  
Prosthodontics residency  
U.S. Air Force

**Renatta Griffith**  
GPR, BronxCare Health System  
New York

**Stephanie Grossman**  
Orthodontic residency  
(certificate and master's degree)  
University of Detroit  
Detroit, Michigan

**Sofia Gutierrez**  
GPR residency, Malcolm Randall  
Medical VA Center

**Christina Hanna**  
GPR at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital

**Jacqueline Hardy**  
AEGD, U.S. Air Force  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Ingmar Hernandez**  
GPR, New York City

**Andrew Holovnia**  
Heartland Dental  
Tampa, Florida

**Justin Hosseini**  
Private practice  
Weston, Florida

**Daniel me Jefferies**  
Underserved population  
Sandpoint, Idaho

**Krysten Johal**  
General dentistry, private practice  
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

**Kasra Khamooshi**  
Private practice

**Bryan Kim**  
GPR, Kings County Hospital  
Brooklyn, New York

**Elen Kirilovsky**  
Residency, Lincoln Medical Center  
Bronx, New York

**Andrea Klein**  
Private practice  
South Florida

**Daniel Krauss**  
General dentist  
West Palm Beach, Florida

**Vera Krupnov**  
Private practice  
Miami, Florida

**Cody LaBelle**  
GPR, Oklahoma

**Meena Lee**  
Private practice  
North Carolina

**Seok Jun Lee**  
Jefferson Dental  
Support Organization  
Dallas, Texas

**Laura Llanos**  
Private practice  
South Florida

**David Martinez**  
Pacific Dental Services  
Associateship  
Naples, Florida

**Alex McKinney**  
Heartland Dental  
Jacksonville, Florida

**Andre Medina**  
Great Expressions  
Miami, Florida

**Stephanie Mendigutia**  
New Family Dentistry  
Hialeah, Florida

**Juleini Meneses**

**Roman Mogilevsky**  
OMS residency  
Rutgers University

**Marshall Moini**  
South Florida

**Juan Morales**  
Private practice

**Matthew Munro**  
Private practice

**Samon Nazemian**  
Pediatric residency  
Howard University  
Washington, D.C.

**Nha Quynh Nguyen**  
Corporate practice  
Houston, Texas

**Emily Norton**  
GPR, VA  
Sepulveda, California

**Gregory Norton**  
GPR, Evanston Hospital  
Illinois

**Julian Ortiz**  
General dentistry  
Tampa, Florida

**Shima Parhizgar**  
Private practice, Canada

**Joseph Parr**

**Krupal Patel**  
Private associateship  
Tampa, Florida

**Nishka Patel**

**Yusdely Gonzalez Perez**  
Associate dentist

**Francesca Pietri**  
Orthodontics and craniofacial  
orthopedics residency  
Eastman Institute for Oral  
Health at the University of  
Rochester in Rochester, New York

**Rodion Pinkhasov**  
South Florida

**Lauren Pinkus**  
Postgraduate residency  
in orthodontics and  
dentofacial orthopedics  
Temple University  
Pennsylvania

**Anushka Prabhu**  
Pediatric residency  
New York

**Gregory Quattlebaum**  
GPR in dental medicine  
Montefiore Medical Center  
Bronx, New York

**Shane Radford**  
Georgia School of Orthodontics  
Sandy Springs, Georgia

**Steven Randall**  
Four-year tour as  
U.S. Army dentist  
North Carolina

**Natalia Ratmiroff**  
GPR, New York Presbyterian  
Methodist Brooklyn Hospital

**Steven Renas**  
Private practice  
Dallas, Texas

**Jorge Romero**  
GPR, Kings County Hospital  
Brooklyn, New York

**Melanie Ross**  
Orthodontic residency  
Tufts University, Massachusetts

**Ammy Rossman**  
Private practice

**Denae Rushing**  
OMS residency and Doctor  
of Medicine (M.D.) candidate  
University of Texas Health  
Science Center  
San Antonio, Texas

**Alexandra Saab**  
Associate, Pacific Dental Services  
Coral Gables, Florida

**William Sainsbury**  
Endodontics residency  
NSU CDM

**Julio Salas**  
Associate  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

**Maria Rojas Salcedo**  
Associate, Deca Dental  
San Antonio, Texas

**Robert Scheddin**  
Private practice

**Lindsay Scott**  
AEGD resident  
Miami VA Healthcare Center

**Michael Serbin**  
GPR in Queens, New York

**Nayef Serhan**  
Associate dentist

**Rajvir Singh**  
Florida

**Paloma Skrzypek**  
General practice  
Canada

**Yanisleidy Soca**  
Private practice  
Miami, Florida

**Jiten Solanki**  
General dentistry

**Shabnam Sorooshiani**

**Olivia Stallard**  
Public health outreach traveling  
through Virginia, Tennessee,  
and Kentucky in mobile dental  
unit for home clinic based in  
Wise, Virginia

**James Tangelos**  
GPR, St. Joseph Mercy  
Oakland Hospital  
Pontiac, Michigan

**Joanna Theodorou**  
Pediatric dentistry residency  
NSU CDM

**Thomas Tolles**  
Heartland Dental  
Melbourne, Florida

**Kayla Tommie**  
Private practice  
Plantation, Florida

**Anthony Tossona**  
Heartland Dental  
Tampa Bay, Florida

**Sam Tover**  
GPR, Jersey Shore University  
Medical Center  
New Jersey

**Kristen Tracy**  
Heartland Dental  
Naples, Florida

**Carl Treyz**  
Greenberg Dental  
St. Petersburg, Florida

**Sujay Trivedi**  
Private practice associateship  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

**Fatimah Waseem**  
GPR, New York

**Daniel Wetcher**  
GPR, New York

**Caitlin Wild**  
Greenberg Dental  
Tampa, Florida

**Benjamin Yoon**  
U.S. Army dentist

**Daniel Young**  
Private practice  
Irvine, California

**Jie Yu**  
General dentist  
Texas

**Maritere Zamora**  
GPR, NYU Langone  
Brooklyn, New York

**Sean Ziegler**  
AEGD  
Idaho State University  
Meridian, Idaho



## Radical Kindness

### Creating Change in the Clinic and the Classroom

BY CAROL BRZOZOWSKI

Erinne Kennedy, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.M.Sc., class of 2015, was born and raised in the small town of Middleport, Ohio, where she watched her father and uncle practice dentistry and her mother work as a dental hygienist. Her parents encouraged her to explore multiple professions, but she was always drawn to health care.

"In my heart, I love to serve people," Kennedy said. "It's what I feel I've been called to do."

While at NSU's College of Dental Medicine (CDM), she engaged in numerous volunteer and leadership positions, including serving as American Student Dental Association vice president and lunch seminar chair, Student Professionalism and Ethics Association president and treasurer, and Student Government Association class president. She also served as a student member of the Humanism and Diversity Committee, Student Research Club vice president, and Member Practice Management Club vice president, in addition to participating in NSU's A Day for Children event.

After graduating from the CDM, she completed a one-year dental general practice residency certificate at the Baltimore VA Medical Center in Maryland.

"The VA is a great opportunity to serve people because many of the veterans receive their care for free," she said. "It was helpful early in my career because I was able to do good dentistry."

Following her residency training, Kennedy was accepted into the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, where she completed a residency in dental public health and a Master of Medical Science in Dental Education—a degree she helped create. She was the first graduate of this program in May 2019 and continues at Harvard as a teacher and lecturer. She also is an associate at Alliance Dental Center LLC in Quincy, Massachusetts, for the Massachusetts State Employees Fund, where her role is to create a preventive practice model.

#### GROUP EFFORTS SPARK CHANGE

"A driving factor in working for the social good is being a part of larger group efforts," Kennedy said. "When we come together, we can create really good change, and good change is needed today. One of my passions is antibiotic stewardship in dentistry. I'm part of an American Dental Association (ADA) expert panel for creating guidelines for antibiotic use."

Kennedy said she wants the dentistry she practices to lead to long-term change. "Currently, my office is exploring a new reimbursement system, a way to measure health in patients, and ways to sustain oral health. The focus on creating and sustaining oral health is what's going to change dentistry 10 years from now. I want to be a part of this new generation of dentistry," she said.

She also writes blogs for numerous media outlets, including Ignite DDS and DewLife. Her articles focus on policy change and intervention, tying in with her passion for social justice in dentistry. The response, she said, is "overwhelming."

As a guest on the ADA's Beyond the Mouth podcast, she discusses what she learned about herself in dental school, including learning to listen and to ask for help. "I also learned about my best, and some of my less-than-great, leadership qualities and how to navigate that space," she said.

In turn, she helps students write curriculum vita, applications, and personal statements. "I have been blessed beyond measure with the mentors I have in my life," she said. "If I can be a blessing to anybody, that's who I want to be."



Kennedy said being there for patients “sparks joy. In dentistry, I have an opportunity to see my patients, and I think most people want to be ‘seen.’ I get to know them as a human. If I can help them in any way, I do.”

#### FINDING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

She also enjoys creating health and preventing disease. “I love to give my patients the authority and ability to be healthy,” she said. Saying “no” is her biggest challenge. “I love what I do. Saying yes is easy, and sometimes I feel like when I say no, I’m saying no to a part of myself. Making sure to create time and space for things that really matter has been really challenging.”

Establishing a core group of people from whom to seek input—including mentors, family members, friends, coworkers, and therapists—can be helpful, she added. “If you want to create sustainable change within

yourself, you need that accountability,” she said.

Kennedy’s commitment to serve has generated honors, including Harvard’s Lois K. Cohen Award in Global Health and a recent community service award for her work creating a state antibiotic stewardship toolkit and website for Massachusetts.

It’s impossible to predict where her career will be in 10 years. “Every day, I learn about a new job a dentist can do or contribute to. Oftentimes, they are jobs that didn’t exist 10 years ago. My Harvard mentor, Dr. Chester Douglass, told me I’m going to have a job where the job description hasn’t been written yet,” she said.

“I’ve always been a pioneer, trying to do something that’s never been done before just to pave the way,” she added. “Even if I fail, maybe I’ve paved a small road for somebody else to come from behind and do better.” ♦

## FAST FACTS

**ERINNE KENNEDY, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.M.SC.**

#### Hometown

Middleport, Ohio

#### Education

B.S. (biology with a Spanish minor)  
Ohio State University (2011)

D.M.D., Nova Southeastern University (2015)

M.P.H., Nova Southeastern University (2015)

Certificate (general practice residency)  
Baltimore VA Medical Center in Maryland (2016)

Certificate (dental public health residency)  
Harvard School of Dental Medicine (2018)

M.M.Sc., Harvard School of Dental Medicine (2019)

#### Professional

American Dental Association (Success series speaker, expert panel member for the 2018 Antibiotic Therapeutics Clinical Practice Guideline)

Academy of General Dentistry (member)

Massachusetts Dental Society (member)

American Association of Public Health Dentistry (member of Council on Education)

Ignite DDS (member)

*Dental Economics* magazine (editorial board member)

*Dental Entrepreneur Woman* junior editorial board member

#### Areas of Expertise

dental public health, leadership, and evidence-based dentistry

#### Social Media

Facebook: Erinne Kennedy DMD, MPH

Instagram: @erinnekennedy

LinkedIn: @erinnekennedydmd

#### Hobbies

yoga, travel, prayer, and journaling



## Follow Your Own North Star

### Insights from an American Board of Oral Medicine Diplomate

BY CAROL BRZOZOWSKI

Lina M. Mejia, D.D.S., M.P.H., likes to say life is a journey, not a guided tour. Mejia's peers describe her sharp diagnostic instincts as a "North Star" leading to successful outcomes, including saving a teenage boy's life. "The oral medicine specialty combines my love for medicine and my passion for dentistry," said Mejia, an associate professor in NSU's College of Dental Medicine (CDM) Department of Oral Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences who teaches both predoctoral students and postgraduate residents.

Mejia's clinical work focuses on soft-tissue diseases. This includes taking and sending biopsies to a pathologist with whom she discusses the case and manages the patient's condition with appropriate treatment and medications. On any given day, Mejia may be working with cases related to precancerous and cancerous lesions, patients who are medically compromised by an autoimmune condition, and side effects from medication and a systemic condition. At any point, she will pursue the thinnest threads if a presumptive diagnosis does not sit well with her.

#### SEEKING ANSWERS

"By the time patients come to me, they have already seen many different providers for the issue they are presenting," Mejia said. "As a diplomate of the American Board of Oral Medicine, I am the only one currently accepting referrals in South Florida."

Mejia is credited for saving the life of a 16-year-old Haitian boy with multiple nodular soft-tissue masses over his mouth and lips. Mejia provided the differential diagnosis of focal epithelial hyperplasia (Heck's disease).

Based on information available, an initial diagnosis of oral florid papillomatosis was presumed. A biopsy was recommended to ensure that the human papilloma virus involved in this case was not an oncovirus (cancer-causing virus).

Mejia was concerned about the esthetic impact of treatment on the young man. After consulting with dermatologist Anna Fallabella, M.D., Mejia began treatment with a topical medication, as well as systemic medications. When the patient did not respond to therapy, she decided to continue looking for answers.

Mejia consulted with Maria Pilar Gutierrez, M.D., a pediatric infectious disease physician at Memorial Regional Hospital South in Hollywood, Florida, to do a further evaluation of the case. Eventually, it was discovered the boy had GATA2—a rare immunodeficiency disorder.

The boy's case was referred to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), where he was able to obtain additional medical help. The NIH ran a genetic profile to obtain more information for future diagnostic benefit. Mejia noted the boy's mother had died a few years

*(continued on page 32)*



*Dr. Lina M. Mejia  
Faculty*



“

**Many things I handle help with the patient's quality of life. It's rewarding when you are able to save a life because you care.”**

—LINA M. MEJIA



(continued from page 30)

earlier from a brain tumor that may have been caused by the same disorder.

“Many things I handle help with the patient’s quality of life. It’s rewarding when you are able to save a life because you care,” she said.

“Dr. Mejia has great diagnostic instincts,” said Michael A. Siegel, D.D.S., M.S., assistant dean for faculty, professor in and chair of the NSU CDM Department of Diagnostic Sciences.

## BIG PICTURE FIRST

Mejia tells students that when they see a patient, they have to look at the big picture first, and then focus on smaller details. “The oral cavity shows you a lot,” she said. “I always say you need to know your patient very well. You cannot treat a stranger. You need to know all the medical conditions; the medications they use; and their social history, such as smoking, alcohol, and recreational drugs. Some of the oral findings can be due to that background. Sometimes, the clinical exam can reveal an underlying systemic condition that hasn’t been diagnosed. We play a very important role, referring patients to their physicians for evaluation and timely treatment.”

Mejia mentioned a few times how happy she was that a 53-year-old woman was diagnosed in a timely manner with a B-cell lymphoma thanks to teamwork that included her students. The patient will have radiation therapy and is expected to do well, Mejia said.

## CANCER PREVENTION

Her interest in oral cancer prevention extends to her role as an educator and lead dental director of an evidence-based smoking cessation program for the NSU Area Health Education Centers. “In dental school, we started incorporating information regarding the social history of the patient into the curriculum. Now, we even ask about e-cigarettes,” said Mejia, adding that discussions about the increased use of vaping products and their associated risks are also incorporated. Patients are told about all the services available in Florida, including NSU’s program that offers free nicotine replacements for patients.

In addition, Mejia conducted a project on oral cancer awareness based on research with CDM dental clinic patients. She presented this research at the European Association of Dental Public Health.

The research amplifies the need for patient education and consciousness regarding oral care, she said.

As president of the Hispanic Dental Association’s South Florida chapter, Mejia has been engaged in efforts to educate the community on the work of a dentist and on dental hygiene basics, bringing bags of dental hygiene items to schools, churches, and events.

## GATA2 History

GATA2 deficiency is a disorder that was first identified in 2011. It is characterized by immunodeficiency, myelodysplastic syndrome (a condition exemplified by ineffective blood cell production), lung disease, and problems of the vascular/lymphatic system.

GATA2 deficiency is diagnosed based on clinical findings, laboratory tests, and genetic testing. Early diagnosis is critical for optimal disease management, prevention of severe complications, treatment, and evaluation of at-risk relatives.

It is caused by mutations in the GATA2 gene, which provides instructions to produce GATA2—a protein controlling when certain genes are “turned on”—and directs the activity of many types of cells, including immune cells. Mutations in the GATA2 gene result in impaired GATA2 protein function, leading to GATA2 deficiency.

Inheritance is autosomal dominant, which means a person needs only one abnormal GATA2 gene copy to have GATA2 deficiency. Symptoms are typically not present at birth. By age 20, about 50 percent of people with a GATA2 mutation have symptoms.

Treatment depends on the symptoms and may include vaccination, antibiotics, and bone-marrow transplant.

*Source: National Institutes of Health Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center*



*Lina Mejia discusses an upcoming community project with members of the CDM's Hispanic Dental Association.*

Mejia graduated from the Universidad CES de Medellin (Colombia) dental program in 1999, then practiced general and cosmetic dentistry for a few years before coming to the United States in 2001. In 2007, she began an oral medicine residency program at the University of California—San Francisco, and obtained a certificate in oral medicine in 2009.

#### COMBINED SKILLS

A year later, Mejia moved to Florida to earn a master's degree in public health at NSU, combining her skills in disease prevention and a desire for promoting health care. She was named an assistant professor in the NSU CDM Department of Oral Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences, then promoted to associate professor in 2018. Mejia sees patients and is on call for oral medicine needs at predoctoral and postdoctoral facilities, as well as in the faculty practice.

"I love my department, my boss, and the people I work with. They've been very supportive. I love my specialty," she said. "Oral medicine is a very important specialty in dentistry, and it is not very common. There are only 10 accredited programs in North America." ♦



## FAST FACTS

**LINA M. MEJIA, D.D.S., M.P.H.**

#### Hometown

Medellin, Colombia

#### Education

D.D.S., Universidad CES de Medellin dental program (1999)

Certificate in Oral Medicine, University of California—San Francisco (2009)

M.P.H., Nova Southeastern University (2015)

#### Professional

Hispanic Dental Association, national member and South Florida chapter president

Academy of Laser Dentistry (member)

American Dental Association (member)

America Dental Education Association (member)

Florida Dental Association (member)

Society of Integrative Oncology (member)

#### Committees

American Academy of Oral Medicine, Board of Trustees and Residents Committee chair

Humanism and Diversity Committee

Laster Committee

Tobacco Cessation Program

#### Hobbies

Pilates and yoga



## “DOC L” DOES IT ALL

From Urgent Care to Psi Omega to the Courtroom

BY ELLEN WOLFSON VALLADARES

Harry Lehrer, D.M.D., M.S.Ed., has just started to talk about his role at the NSU College of Dental Medicine (CDM) when he is politely interrupted by Serena Ghodasra, a fourth-year (D4) dental student. She and her third-year (D3) assistant have completed their initial examination on a patient who walked into the CDM's Urgent Care Clinic that morning with an abscess on his gums.

The dental students discovered a loose crown and possible other complications and would like Lehrer's advice on how to proceed. “Doc L,” as he is affectionately known, takes a quick look at the patient and gives the students some instructions. They then continue their dental work, independently and confidently.

Three of the four chairs in the Urgent Care Clinic are occupied that day with patients who have come seeking immediate attention and relief from various dental ailments. During the next 90 minutes, the rhythm continues much as it started. Lehrer chats in a relaxed manner, popping up from time to time to assist with anesthesia, consult on the correct

instrument to use, or answer students' questions.

While the back and forth between Lehrer and the students is the norm, Doc L said there's no such thing as a typical day in the Urgent Care Clinic. “You never know the type of patients you're going to see,” he said, adding that that's exactly what he and the students appreciate about this unique setup.

facility that provides typical dental office scenarios,” said Lehrer, who has been with NSU for more than 17 years.

Since it opened, the Urgent Care Clinic has seen more than 2,500 walk-in patients, including a mugging victim and those with tooth fractures, infections, and jaw-joint discomfort. In addition, the facility provides treatment for dental emergencies, such as a

**“If I think a student will benefit from doing a procedure, no matter the difficulty, I'm going to show them what to do, and I'm not going to micromanage them.”**

—HARRY LEHRER

The CDM's Urgent Care Clinic opened in August 2016 to serve patients who required emergency dental care. Lehrer, an associate professor in the CDM's Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, was tapped to be the director.

“When they asked if I would do it, I said yes, not only because I knew it would be good for the community, but also for the students. This is a learning

patient with a chipped tooth needing to attend an important function that day.

Most patients are experiencing discomfort, and the first order of business is to alleviate their pain and assess their needs, Lehrer said. If patients require services beyond the scope of the predoctoral students, they are referred to one of the postdoctoral facilities.

The D4 and D3 students in the Urgent Care Clinic handle a wide

*(continued on page 36)*



*According to Harry Lehrer (right), "You never know the type of patients you're going to see."*



(continued from page 34)

range of services, including extractions, root-canal treatment, fillings, bite adjustments, and more. Many patients are screened to become comprehensive care patients and continue being treated in one of the predoctoral or postdoctoral facilities.

For Lehrer, the hands-on environment of the urgent care facility matches ideally with his teaching philosophy, which focuses on helping students gain skills through progressive learning.

"If I think a student will benefit from doing a procedure, no matter the difficulty, I'm going to show them what to do, and I'm not going to micromanage them. They might get a third of it done before they need me to help them. The next time, because it was a hands-on experience, they might do two-thirds of it before needing

help, and the next time they might do it all on their own. That's progressive learning," said Lehrer, who has been named Professor of the Year twice and was voted to hood the D4s at their recent graduation.

The students aren't the only ones learning in the Urgent Care Clinic, however. "Since I've been here, I have gotten an education on what stress can do to people, what it does to your bite, and how that extrapolates into pain," he said.

One recent example was a 24-year-old woman who came to the Urgent Care Clinic because of agonizing pain on the right side of her mouth. When the students reported they couldn't find anything wrong with her, Lehrer approached it from another angle. He asked the woman if she'd experienced any stress lately. She

said she had recently broken up with her longtime boyfriend. The added stress was causing her to grind her teeth at night, which caused her bite to become imbalanced and painful. They adjusted her bite and fixed the issue.

Lehrer said his count is currently up to 25 patients who have come in purportedly needing root canals and have found relief with a simple bite adjustment. Lehrer even posted a sign on the Urgent Care Clinic wall reading "Occlusion! Occlusion! Occlusion!" as a vivid reminder to students to always check the patient's bite.

## IMBALANCE CAN HURT

"We're all imbalanced in our bite, like when you walk, you may lean more to one side. That's a functional imbalance. When you add in stress, you start grinding harder during your sleep, and after a while, the functional imbalance turns into a pathological imbalance and starts to hurt," Lehrer explained.

"Twenty-five times, in different situations, we balanced the patients' bites, and then we would see them back in a week in case they might actually need a root canal. None of them ended up needing a root canal. At first, the patients look at me like I'm crazy just adjusting the bite. Then they come in and are amazed and happy and hugging us."

Lehrer said the lesson on stress has been like earning "another degree for me," and he's happily passing it on to the students.

While the patients are coming in with stress, and the nature of an urgent care facility might be

## Do You Swear to Tell the Truth?

You've seen it on all the television courtroom dramas—that moment when the attorney calls his expert witness to the stand to offer a professional opinion on the evidence. If it were a case involving dental matters, that expert might be Harry Lehrer.

It's a job that started quite by accident with one case several years ago. Lehrer is now a well-known expert witness called on regularly to provide his dental knowledge in a variety of real-life court cases, from workers' compensation to dental negligence.

"Sometimes, I'm asked to support the plaintiff, which is usually the patient. Other times, I support the defense, which is the dentist," Lehrer said. "For me to get involved, it has to be something meritorious, where I feel I can make a difference."

He has been asked whether a patient's jaw numbness following a procedure could have been prevented, or if a worker's injury was actually caused on the job or was a preexisting condition. The process encompasses reviewing files and X-rays and creating reports. Often, he attends depositions.

"When I first started, some of the lawyers would try to discredit me. They don't really do that anymore, because I have a proven reputation now," he said. "What is it that Judge Judy says? 'If you tell the truth, then you never have to worry about what you're going to say.' "

## Harry Lehrer said the lesson on stress has been like earning “another degree for me,” and he’s happily passing it on to the students.

considered stressful, Lehrer and his students say it’s quite the opposite on their end. “It’s not stressful at all. I look forward to it,” Ghodasra said. “It’s actually slower paced than working on the main floor, and with the one-on-one experience, I feel you learn more.”

Ghodasra said it also helps to have Lehrer so close at hand. “He’s awesome. He teaches us so much. When you’re coming in, especially as a D3 not knowing a lot, and you come to the Urgent Care Clinic, he’s the person who will answer all your questions that sometimes you’re afraid to ask in a more fast-paced environment,” she explained.

With the clever signs he has posted on the walls, his sense of humor, and a passion for teaching the students, Lehrer agrees that the Urgent Care Clinic is anything but stressful. “I come here because I want to,” he said. “I feel I can help everyone who comes in. And when they leave, and you get hugs and cards written to you, it’s so rewarding. The students get so much out of it.”

### PSI OMEGA FRATERNITY

While he gives his heart and soul to the Urgent Care Clinic, it’s only one part of Lehrer’s multifaceted interests and involvements inside and outside the CDM. Lehrer, an alumnus of the Psi Omega dental fraternity at the University of Florida, has become the face of NSU’s Psi Omega fraternity, holding the position of deputy councilor since 2006. He is currently the province councilor overseeing a region that

includes five universities and recently completed his term as the Psi Omega national president. He also holds a national position as treasurer of the Interfraternity Council.

“As far as I know, I am the only Psi Omega member in the NSU CDM faculty. Therefore, it’s paramount for me to be involved to keep our chapter flourishing,” Lehrer said.

At NSU and nationally, Psi Omega participates in community service projects. These include food drives; medical outreach trips to provide dental services to underserved areas; and projects, such as collecting school supplies for children in need.

Lehrer has also put his dental knowledge and skills to use in the courtroom, acting as an expert witness on a wide variety of cases (see page 36). In addition, he became a certified fraud examiner in 2014. “I hate to be bored,” he said.

For fun, he loves baseball, which he played at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, as well as other sports, like golf and softball. He also enjoys dining out and traveling. He and his wife, Lisa, have one daughter, Breyanna, a sophomore at NSU University School.

Hector Doman, who works as Lehrer’s assistant in the Urgent Care Clinic and has been at the CDM since 2006 as a student, volunteer, and employee, said he sees firsthand why so many students appreciate Lehrer. “He’s the kind of person who the new students hear good things about even before they meet him,” he said. “When he teaches, he makes sure they get it. He cares about everyone.” ♦



### HARRY LEHRER, D.M.D., M.S.ED.

#### Hometown

Jersey Shore, New Jersey

#### Degrees

B.S. in Chemistry, University of Miami (1979)

D.M.D., University of Florida (1984)

M.S.Ed. in Health Education, Nova Southeastern University (2004)

#### Professional

Interfraternity Council, treasurer

Psi Omega Dental Fraternity  
2017–2018 national president

Psi Omega Dental Fraternity  
province councilor

Association of Certified Fraud  
Examiners Advisory Council

#### Personal

Married to Lisa with one daughter,  
15-year-old Breyanna

#### Hobbies

baseball, softball, golf, dining out,  
and traveling





## Impressions Honored with Silver Scroll

The College of Dental Medicine's *Impressions* magazine was honored with the Silver Scroll Division 2 Award for Most-Improved Publications for the spring and fall 2018 editions in the Dental Journalism Awards sponsored by the International College of Dentists (ICD), USA Section. The journalism awards are one of the ICD's longest ongoing projects.

The award was presented in September, during the annual meeting of the American Association for Dental Editors & Journalists (AADEJ) held in San Francisco, California. This is the second time *Impressions* has been honored by the ICD. The magazine received the Honorable Mention for Outstanding Cover for the summer 2016 edition. ♦

## Researchers Conferred with Development Grant

Six CDM researchers were awarded a President's Faculty Research and Development Grant for their project "Novel Approach to Enhance the Robust Osteogenesis of Human Gingival Stem Cells." They are Umadevi Kandalam, Ph.D.; Toshihisa Kawai, Ph.D.; Alexandru Movila, Ph.D.; Alireza Heidari, Ph.D.; Yogin K. Patel, M.S.; and Deshek Patel, B.S.

The President's Faculty Scholarship Award Program was initiated in 1999 by then-NSU President Ray

Ferrero, Jr., J.D. Early in its inception, it was renamed the President's Faculty Research and Development Grant (PFRDG) program. Today, the PFRDG program continues to directly support Vision 2020's research-focused core values and strategic priorities by providing seed money to new research areas for which external funding will be sought, or to move current research initiatives to new levels of competitiveness for external funding. ♦

## CDM Honors NSU Student Life Achievement Award Winners

Fourth-year student Francesca Pietri was named the CDM 2019 Student of the Year and the CDM Student Chapter of the American Association of Women Dentists (AAWD) was named Graduate Organization of the Year during the 2019 NSU Student Life Achievement Awards (STUEYS).

The STUEYS honor those who further a sense of campus community, focusing on NSU's Core Values of academic excellence, student centered, integrity, innovation, opportunity, scholarship/research, diversity, and community.

Pietri was recognized for representing the CDM's goal of creating outstanding clinicians and leaders in their communities. The 2019 graduate exhibited a strong work ethic while in the CDM, and while earning her bachelor's degree in biology and master's degree in biomedical sciences from NSU. As a leader, Pietri served on executive boards, was a college ambassador and class representative, and participated in the annual Give Kids A Smile event and dental medical outreach trips outside the United States.

"I feel privileged to have been nominated by the faculty, staff, and my peers to receive such recognition," Pietri said.

The Student Chapter of the American Association of Women Dentists, which consists of predoctoral students, postgraduates, and faculty members, aims to advance, connect, and enrich the lives of women dentists.

"The NSU CDM Student Chapter of AAWD is an amazing organization led by dentistry's female leaders of tomorrow, with a work ethic second to none and a vision of giving. It bonds women in the dental profession. I am honored to be the faculty adviser, as the members inspire me every day," said Sharon Siegel, D.D.S., M.S., M.B.A., professor and chair of the Department of Prosthodontics.

The CDM chapter participates in various philanthropic efforts throughout the year, including the AIDS Walk, cancer runs, and Feeding South Florida, for which the chapter raised more than 883 pounds



*Linda C. Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P., former CDM dean and professor (left), with 2019 CDM Student of the Year Francesca Pietri*

of food. The organization also led tutorials for predoctoral students and collaborated with companies such as Colgate in hosting oral hygiene events. The CDM's AAWD also embraces mentorship and fellowship opportunities.

"I have been a part of the AAWD since my first year at the CDM," said class of 2020 student Nicole Elia, CDM AAWD president. "Being in AAWD means taking part in community service activities, academic learning and teaching opportunities, and even much-needed social events to take a breather from the busy curriculum of dental school. We build relationships with other women in the dental field and support one another. When people ask me about our organization, I tell them that we may be small in number, but we are mighty. AAWD will continue to make great strides in the years to come." ♦



## NSU Endodontics Receives Diplomate and Research Kudos



Kenneth M. Hargreaves, D.D.S., Ph.D., editor of the *Journal of Endodontics* (left), presents the Basic Research: Biology Award to Taner C. Sayin.

The CDM's Department of Endodontics earned awards for its new endodontic diplomates and a biology research paper from the American Association of Endodontics (AAE) during its annual meeting in Montreal, Canada.

A highlight of the meeting's four days of networking and workshops is the pinning of the new diplomates. To receive diplomate status, participants must complete a written case history and an oral examination. The 2019 meeting marked a new record, as 150

diplomates were inducted in the largest class size to date. The CDM's four new members are Jason Foreman, D.D.S.; Geoffrey Sas, D.D.S.; Mary E. Sorrentino, D.M.D.; and Taner C. Sayin, D.D.S., department chair.

The department also received a *Journal of Endodontics* award. The monthly publication showcases the latest changes in the field with new practice methods, technology, and case studies. The CDM's Department of Endodontics collaborated with peers and current faculty members, including Michael Flax, D.D.S., M.S., postgraduate director, and Sayin.

The department earned the award for its biology research paper "Culture-Independent Characterization of the Microbiome of Healthy Pulp." The research tests if healthy pulp lacks bacteria. DNA and RNA samples were taken from the pulp of each tooth from 10 patients who took part in the study, resulting in evidence that bacteria DNA can still be detected in healthy teeth.

The department continues to make great strides in the field, from hosting its annual alumni congress last spring and performing dental work abroad in Barcelona, Spain, to launching a global project that will bring several continuing education courses to NSU. ♦



## Resident Honored

Keith Sonneveld, D.D.S., (OMFS, '19), received a Resident Scientific Award from the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS). Sonneveld is a fellow in cosmetic and advanced maxillofacial surgery at Aesthetics International USA in Alpharetta, Georgia. The AAOMS honored more than 20 of its members during its 100th anniversary celebration for their contributions to the specialty through their outstanding research, education, and advocacy. ♦



## Rashondia W. Gaines Honored with National Faculty Award

Rashondia W. Gaines, D.D.S., M.S., CDM associate professor and director of the CDM Faculty Practice, the Predoctoral Clinic, and the Evening Clinic, left, received the 2019 National Dental Association Foundation (NDAF)/Colgate-Palmolive Faculty Recognition Award in the teaching category.

Winners were honored at the NDAF/Colgate-Palmolive Faculty Recognition Awards Luncheon during the 106th National Dental Association Annual Convention in Washington, D.C., in July.

The faculty awards program honors individuals who have demonstrated excellence in professional development and a willingness to support and help others in their quest for knowledge and advancement. Each recipient receives a cash award from the Colgate-Palmolive Company. ♦

## Orthodontic Resident Receives National Accolade

Farnaz Younessian, D.D.S., a third-year resident in the CDM's Department of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics, is one of six orthodontic residents from the United States and Canada to receive the annual Research Aid Award, presented by the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) Foundation—the charitable section of the AAO. The foundation provides support to orthodontic education programs and orthodontic research.

Younessian's research project "Effects of Local Administration of Denosumab and Bisphosphonate (Clodronate) on Orthodontic Tooth Movement and Root Resorption in a Rat Model" was completed under the supervision of Shiva

Khatami, D.D.S., Ph.D., associate professor in the CDM's Department of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics.

"This research project will benefit both orthodontic clinicians and researchers by introducing a clinical solution for management of severe root resorption in orthodontic patients," said Younessian, who will graduate in December 2019. She completed her dental education and orthodontic residency in Tehran, Iran, then worked for two years at the Dentofacial Deformity Research Center at the University of Shahid Beheshti in Tehran. Following her graduation from the CDM program, Younessian wants to continue to focus on her role as a clinician-researcher. ♦





## Dental Fraternity Hosts Seventh Annual Oral Cancer Walk

The CDM Chapter of the Alpha Omega (AO) International Dental Fraternity raised \$8,000 during its seventh annual Oral Cancer 5K Run and Walk-a-Thon, which was earmarked to help an oral cancer patient from the oral and maxillo-facial surgery clinic.

The event raised funds through donations and fees from those participating in the run/walk, along with donations from yearly sponsors, such as Aspen Dental and Henry Schein. In an effort to raise awareness for oral cancer, AO offered free public oral cancer screenings performed by dental students and oral surgery residents during the event.

AO's Oral Cancer 5K Run and Walk-a-Thon was launched in 2013 by a fraternity member who was diagnosed with oral cancer during dental school. ♦

# Build upon your NSU legacy.

**Be active in your alumni society  
and leave a lasting impression.**

The chain of events started as you applied to NSU. It continued as you became a student at the College of Dental Medicine and then graduated to become a member of the dental profession. You are a vital part of the NSU family.

Make your voice heard by becoming active in the CDM Alumni Society. We also are accepting nominations for the CDM Alumni Society Advisory Board.

The chain begins and continues with you.

For the latest information, visit our website at [dental.nova.edu](http://dental.nova.edu). You can update your personal information at [dental.nova.edu/alumni-relations](http://dental.nova.edu/alumni-relations).

For more information on becoming involved, email Rosalie Marin at [rosalie.marin@nova.edu](mailto:rosalie.marin@nova.edu), or call (954) 262-7317.

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