PULP NON-FICTION

UNC ASOD · STUDENT RESEARCH GROUP (SRG) NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2021 · VOLUME 4 · ISSUE 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNC | ADAMS SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

AADOCR
American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research

NSRG National Student Research Group

Editor's Note

On behalf of this year's Student Research Group newsletter team, it is my pleasure to introduce you to our latest edition of Pulp Non-Fiction. In the pages that follow, we invite you to join us as we celebrate the efforts of our passionate students and faculty across a diverse spectrum of research. Persevering amidst challenges imposed by the pandemic and coming back stronger than ever has not been an easy task. From student research awards, to faculty grants and other exciting initiatives within our walls, it is clear that we have much to celebrate within the UNC dental research community.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the faculty, learners, staff, and countless other individuals who dedicate their time and efforts to make such work possible. Advancing our profession through research is truly a team effort, and it would not be possible without each and every one of you. We are thrilled to bring you this publication highlighting the stories, accomplishments, and insights of those among us.

Wishing everyone continued success and safety in the new year!

Amanda Swanson, DDS 2023, Editor-in-Chief

2021-2022 Newsletter Committee

Mylan Young

Nishma Vias

John Kwiatkowski

President's Address

These past couple years have been very challenging for everyone as COVID-19 continues to affect many aspects of our lives. We have seen changes in the way things are done in classes, in clinic, in lab, and in countless other areas. One of the most interesting changes that I can recall is the change seen in the research community. It felt like the entire world stopped and redirected their efforts to fight COVID-19 and collaboration became much more important. Many research topics pivoted to incorporate COVID-19 research, conferences became virtual, and researchers found ways to continue exploring their areas of study remotely. Though these posed new challenges, they also provided opportunities which we had not explored before: a virtual world allowed us to attend presentations and seminars by experts in their fields from the comfort of our homes; researchers from all over the world had much easier ways to connect and collaborate; shared experiences in dealing with the pandemic allowed us to teach and learn from each other. I am incredibly proud of the way that our students, faculty, staff, and residents overcame these obstacles and continued to make strides in their areas of research. It is amazing to be part of such a supportive community here at the Adams School of Dentistry and I cannot wait to see what our Student Research Group members accomplish in the coming years.

Mustafa Girnary, DDS 2023, SRG President

2022 EXECUTIVE BOARD

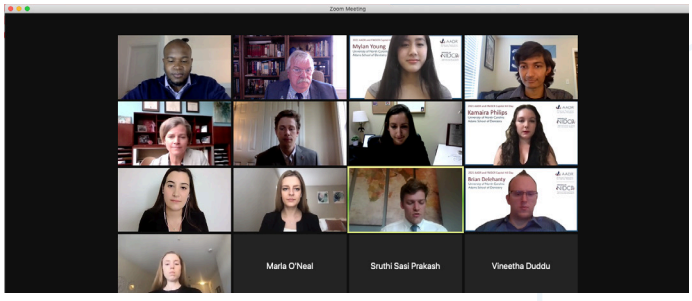
L to R: Mylan Young (Advocacy Chair), Amanda Swanson (Secretary), Mustafa Girnary (President), Skylar McGaughey (Treasurer), Angeliz Rivera-Concepción (Historian)

Dental Research Day and Advocacy/Capitol Hill Day

March 17th, 2021

Mustafa Girnary

UNC Dental Research Day and Advocacy/Capitol Hill Day happened to fall on the same day this past year and both were a great success. It was our first ever hybrid Dental Research Day here at the school with the majority of the presentations occurring virtually, followed by some in-person hands-on workshops in the afternoon. As always, virtual presentation platforms come with their own challenges (special thanks to our technical support staff for helping us work out any issues); but our moderators, presenters, and attendees did an amazing job navigating the website. It was great seeing so many presentations occurring simultaneously just like a traditional conference. I loved attending the different presentations and seeing how well everyone was able to summarize their research in just a few minutes. It was also great practice for the AADR conference which occurred in a similar format; after having participated in research day, I felt like I was well prepared to present for the AADR poster session.



Between oral presentations, poster sessions, Dr. Rena D'Souza's keynote speech, and afternoon seminars and workshops, it did not seem like there was time to fit anything else in that day. However, during the break between the morning and afternoon sessions for research day, a small group of students and faculty attended AADR's virtual Advocacy/Capitol Hill Day. This is a day during which student and faculty representatives from different schools connect with senators and their staff in order to advocate for dental and craniofacial research funding from the NIH. We had many great students share their experiences involving dental research and the journey that brought them to where they are. Dr. Everett and Interim Dean Dr. Byerley also shared their perspectives as faculty members with representatives from Senator Thom Tillis and Senator Richard Burr's offices. I felt like we all had a very productive conversation and were able to truly highlight the importance of dental research funding and how it influences the overall health of the people in our state. Thank you to everyone who attended these virtual events. As things get back to "normal" in the coming years, hopefully we are able to travel to these events again and interact face-to-face!

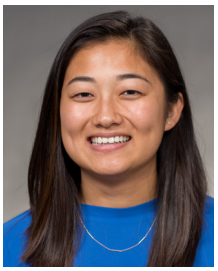
Dental Research Day

Award Winners

Dentsply Sirona/ADHA Graduate Student Clinician's Research

Dental Hygiene Category
Wai-Sum Leung
Mentor: Beth Kornegay

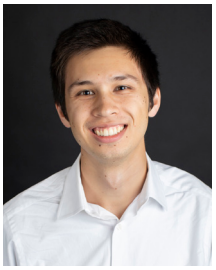
Student Research Group James Bawden Award



DDS Category
Gabriella Gallo and Deborah Liu
Mentor: Laura Jacox

Mentor Category
Apoena Ribeiro

Hinman Student Research Symposium Award



Zachary Burk
Mentor: Kimon Divaris

AADR Student Research Day Award

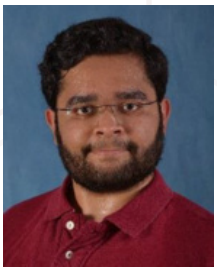
Amanda Swanson
Mentor: Jennie Brame

Student Competition for Advancing Dental Research and its Application (SCADA) Award

Emily Imes
Mentor: Kimon Divaris

NC-AADR Turner Award

DDS Category
1st Place: Mylan Young and Davied Sanchez
Mentor: Rishma Shah

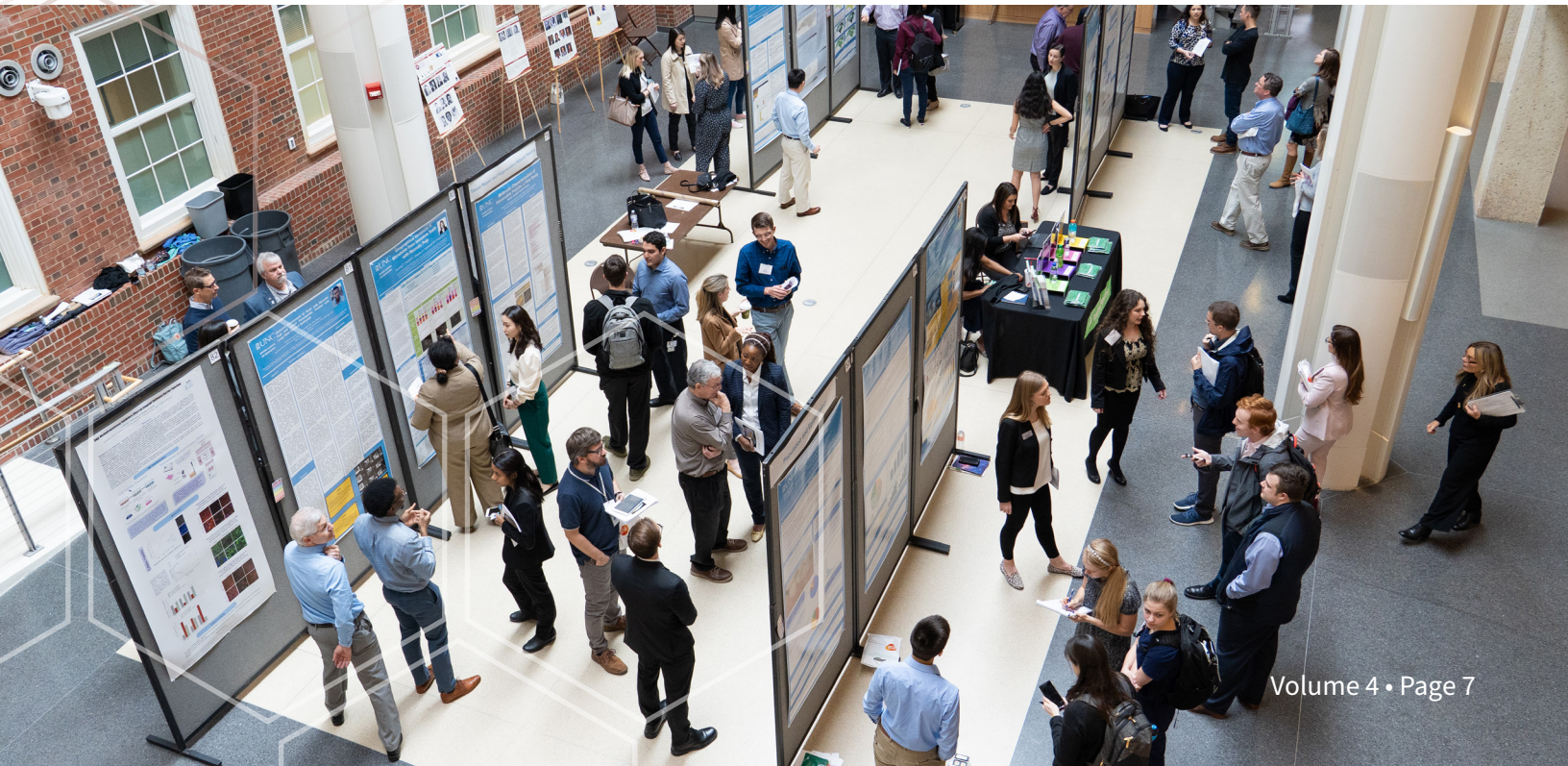


PhD Category
1st Place: Kshitij Parag-Sharma
Mentor: Antonio Amelio

Not Pictured:

Master's Category
1st place: Kristen Cockrell
Mentor: Jennie Brame

Staff/Post-Doctoral Category
1st place: Clare Bocklage
Mentor: Laura Jacox

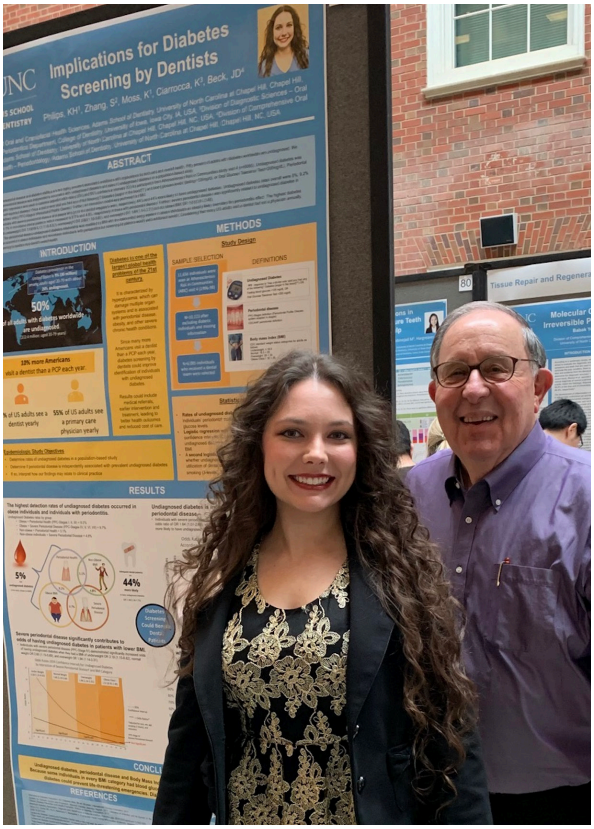


Linking Periodontal Status to Systemic Disease

An Interview with Kamaira Philips

Skylar McGaughey

Kamaira Philips, a third-year dental student at the UNC Adams School of Dentistry, has an unwavering commitment to dental research. This year, Philips and her research team were awarded the 2021 Sunstar World Perio Research Award for their paper, “Periodontal disease classifications and incident coronary heart disease in the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities study.” The 2021 Sunstar World Perio Research Award was granted to the best paper on periodontology and its relation to oral and systemic health. In the paper, Philips and her colleagues used data from a longitudinal study to explore the potential relationships between periodontal disease and incident coronary heart disease (CHD).



Philips began conducting research with Dr. James Beck in 2017, who she says, “has been an amazing mentor… and role model to me.” Her work with Dr. Beck on the periodontal disease classifications and incident CHD study offered the perfect avenue for Philips to further explore her passion for precision medicine and its applications in oral health. With 6,300 participants studied over an average of seventeen years, Philips and her colleagues analyzed thousands of health data points collected from the study participants. The project is unique in that Philips and her team characterized periodontal disease using a more detailed periodontal classification system, the Periodontal Profile Class (PPC) System. The PPC stages separate periodontal disease into seven different phenotypes compared to the 2017 Classification of Periodontal and Peri-Implant Diseases and Conditions model that has four stages. Furthermore, the PPC stages system suggests periodontal disease progression is not always linear. For example, rather than progressing from stage one to stage two, patients

studied with the PPC stages classification system can progress from stage one directly to stage three, four, etc. When asked about using the PPC stages classification, Philips said, “my periodontal disease may not be the same as your periodontal disease… We are learning that diseases such as periodontal disease can appear similar but actually be very different… [we need] to better understand, classify, identify, and treat their disease instead of resorting to a one size fits all treatment.”

In the study’s conclusion, Philips and her team determined that periodontal disease characterized by severe tooth loss has a significant moderate association with incident CHD. A member from Philips’ team will be presented with the award, along with a $10,000 prize, at the Euro Perio 2022 conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. “If we can better identify disease in patients,” says Philips, “we will be more likely to not only impact the patient’s oral health, but also their cardiac risk through periodontal therapy.”

For further reading, Philips’ publication is cited below:

Beck, JD, Philips, K, Moss, K, et al. Periodontal disease classifications and incident coronary heart disease in the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities study. J Periodontol. 2020; 91: 1409– 1418. https://doi.org/10.1002/JPER.19-0723

DDS Short-Term Research Fellowship Awardees 2021-2022

Caroline Allbert

Spectral Characteristics of Speech in Children with Repaired Cleft Palate

Mentor: David Zajac

Carolyn Collins

The Antimicrobial Efficacy of Silver Nanoparticles

Mentor: Roland Arnold

Mustafa Girnary

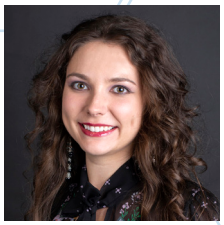
Print Quality of Resin Patterns on Different 3D Printers

Mentor: Ingeborg De Kok

Katherine Grant

Evaluation of fit based on Margin Design for 3D Printed Crown Patterns

Mentor: Wendy Clark



Kamaira Philips

Influence of abrasive strips finishing/polishing technique on biofilm adherence in Bulk-Fill composite resins

Mentor: Apoena Ribeiro

Neal Quinn

Evaluation of Mechanical Strength of 3D Printed Resin Crowns

Mentor: Wendy Clark

Davied Sanchez

Low-Intensity Pulsed Ultrasound for Rapid Prototyping of Skeletal Muscle

Mentor: Rishma Shah

Jared Sobo

New Aged Tricalcium Silicates Discoloration of Dentin

Mentor: Taseer Sulaiman

Nishma Vias

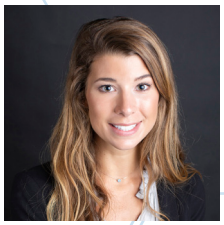
Characterization of Biomarker Profiles for Periodontal Disease Classes

Mentor: Julie Marchesan

Mylan Young

MicroRNA Profiling in Patients with External Cervical Resorption

Mentor: Rishma Shah



Emily Nan Stallings

Effect of Ultrasound Application on the Surface roughness of Glass Ionomer

Mentor: Bert Vasconcellos

Arlet Montes Sanchez

Hispanic Oral health Prevention and Education Program

Mentor: Apoena Ribeiro

Raven Selden

Evaluating Effects of Animal-Assisted Therapy on Anxiety in Pediatric Dental Patients

Mentor: Laura Jacox

How to Stay Organized with Your Student Research Project

Angeliz Rivera-Concepción

1 Meet regularly with your mentor/advisor.

They can help you set priorities and troubleshoot when issues arise. Don't be afraid to admit when you are struggling and need additional guidance. They are here to help, so be sure to use them!

2 Do some reading about your research topic.

It is important to have a solid understanding of what is known about your topic from the literature. Be sure to spend time exploring new findings that may be relevant to your research interest.

3 Create a to-do list.

Work with your mentor to write a research plan, and set smaller goals that will help you along the way. While this may change as your project evolves, it will help you to stay on schedule and meet important deadlines.

4 Set up a daily routine.

Whether preparing for experiments by reading protocols, scheduling meetings with key collaborators, or analyzing collected data, try to devote time each week to making measurable progress.

5 Be prepared to pivot.

The progression of a research project is rarely linear, and requires flexibility when things don't go according to plan. Mistakes happen, but what matters most is how you handle them and the lessons you learn moving forward.

Research Faculty Highlights

Dr. Rishma Shah, PhD, MSc, BDS

Assistant Professor, Division of Craniofacial and Surgical Care
Section Editor of The Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Journal

Dr. Shah is an orthodontist-scientist with a special interest in craniofacial and dentofacial deformity patients. Over the past 21 years, she has managed patients who have had to endure lifelong treatments to correct their deformity and understands the challenges clinicians face in treating patients with facial deformity.

The importance, novelty, and innovation of Dr. Shah's research endeavors have been recognized through the award of prestigious grants and prizes from institutions such as the Royal College of Surgeons of England, the American Association of Orthodontists Foundation, and more recently a $2.1 million R01 award from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research.

Q: How and why did you get involved in craniofacial research?

As clinicians, we strive to provide the best standard of care for our patients, and research is critical to the continual development of effective and efficient therapies that are even more successful than those in our current armamentarium. My background in biomaterials and tissue engineering has enabled me to interface between the basic sciences and clinical orthodontics.

I have developed the following research goals with my clinical experiences in mind: (1) Understand the role of the craniofacial muscles in facial deformity with a view to developing therapies to manage and/or prevent deformity; (2) Engineer craniofacial skeletal muscle for implantation in patients who are missing facial muscle due to congenital or acquired reasons.

Q: What are your short and long-term goals for your research?

I have been fortunate to have worked with many talented collaborators and students, and to also be funded for other clinical and educational research projects I have initiated. I plan to work on the near-term goals as outlined by the funded research proposals. My future goals include continuing to forge strong clinical and research collaborations nationally and internationally, secure funding to continue this important work, disseminate research findings and build on the current knowledge base, and, most importantly, mentor students who have the interest and potential to follow a clinician-scientist career pathway.

Dr. Patricia Miguez, DDS, MS, PhD

Assistant Professor, Periodontology

Dr. Miguez is a periodontist who runs an active research laboratory focused on exploring and developing potential therapeutics for patients with periodontal disease and bone loss. Her projects are funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research Center (NIDCR), Osteology Foundation, and National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS).

Q: What are your research interests and current projects?

Our laboratory focuses on investigating the role of extracellular matrix (ECM) molecules in mineralized tissue homeostasis and regeneration, for potential therapeutics on bone and dentin maintenance. One of our main projects involves the utilization of synthetically generated glycosaminoglycans (sugars in ECM) that target osteoclastogenesis and inflammation with the goal of preventing alveolar bone loss. This project is also in partnership with researchers at the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy.

Another main project currently active in the laboratory is the utilization of a collagen matrix cross-linker, a natural compound present in citrus fruits, and its role in bone regeneration. Our laboratory was the first to show this compound, hesperidin, to be osteogenic in vitro and in vivo in a rat mandible model of bone defect. We are currently pursuing a method of sustainable delivery of this compound for the purpose of regenerating bone in a timely and higher quality manner due to hesperidin's unique ability to promote collagen maturation.

Q: How does your research impact the dental and health field?

This research is important to the field of bone biology and periodontology within dentistry as such discoveries can significantly impact dental practice and patient care. Current marketed therapies fall short in regenerating bone and maintaining alveolar bone health. Finding novel therapeutics that target the ECM is a relatively unexplored field as, for the longest time, ECM molecules were thought to be primarily for cell structural and migrating support. Just in the past couple of decades research has taken off into exploring ECM effect on cell signaling and its implementation towards tissue engineering, which can highly impact regenerative medicine and dentistry.

Q: What are your future plans for your laboratory?

My plans are to expand this research program to include novel and predictable ways to utilize promising ECM molecules and ECM modifications to regenerate mineralized tissues. I have engaged collaborators in the School of Pharmacy, School of Chemistry at UNC among other institutions in the country in this pursuit as this vision can only be accomplished with a diverse scientific team covering multiple areas such as but not limited to bioengineering, chemistry, pharmacology and immunology. The goal of expanding this program is also to be able to include and train more students and scholars into the next generation of young scientists and clinician-scientists.

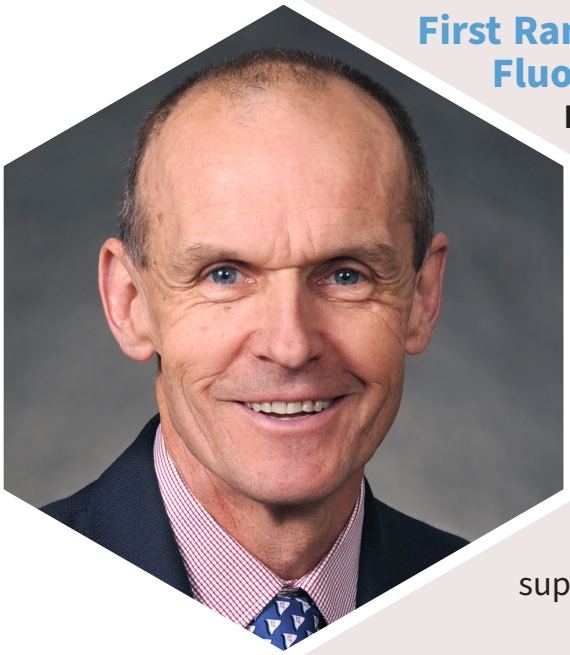
Innovative Research Projects

Salivary Gland Research Awarded $2.5 Million Grant

Dr. Antonio Amelio, PhD

Associate Professor, Division of Oral and Craniofacial Health Sciences

Dr. Amelio and his laboratory are studying the molecular mechanisms behind tumor cell differentiation in mucoepidermoid carcinomas, which are the most common type of salivary gland cancer. The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research Center (NIDCR) awarded Amelio's laboratory a 5-year, $2.49 million R01 grant to conduct this research, which aims to identify and develop potential therapeutics for increased patient recovery and survival.



First Randomized Controlled Trial on Effectiveness of Fluoride

Dr. Gary Slade, BDS, DDPH, PhD

John W. Stamm Distinguished Professor of Dentistry, Division of Pediatric and Public Health

Many studies have shown the protective effects of fluoride on teeth, but they have been limited to cohort and case control studies. Dr. Slade is the first to study fluoride's effectiveness through a randomized controlled trial, the highest level of evidence. His project, waterBEST, will compare dental decay levels in children receiving or not receiving bottled fluoridated water to determine if decay levels differ. This may prove essential to lawmakers for supporting legislation for widespread community fluoridation.

Faculty-Student Research Mixer

The UNC Student Research Group (SRG) was thrilled to welcome the in-person return of our annual faculty-student mixer. Learners of all levels attended to share food and fellowship with key faculty, discussing their research involvement and getting to know each other more deeply. This event allowed us to pair students interested in starting research with available faculty mentors, as well as provide a constructive space for others already involved in research to network and socialize.

What Have SRG Members Been Up to This Fall?

Amanda Swanson

Dinner & Learn with Dr. Martha Ann Keels, DDS, PhD

"I need to do more than just drill and fill. I need to understand why, so I can help improve it. That is what research allows me to do."
- Dr. Keels

Dr. Keels challenged SRG members to think about unique career opportunities as she spoke on the topic of "Research in Private Practice." Dr. Keels not only practices pediatric dentistry and owns a private office in Durham, but has also been heavily involved with research and other academic initiatives throughout her career. We learned about her current NIH-funded in-office research program, her path to obtaining a PhD and how that influences her clinical care, as well as what it means to be involved with research outside of academia. She spoke about the great need for those who are passionate about advancing the evidence base, and advised us to stay connected with colleagues after graduation. Thank you for spending your evening with us, Dr. Keels!

Congratulations

2021-2022 ADEA Academic Dental Career Fellows!

Sarah Dobson

DDS 2024

Mentor:
Dr. Sylvia Frazier-Bowers

Project: "Exploring current engagement of co-curricular activities and how to best inculcate cultural competence into the dental student learning environment"

Favorite moment/experience: I have thoroughly enjoyed learning about various faculty members' paths to academia and how each story varies greatly. I've also been able to hear their stories about the impacts they've made in students' lives and how those connections are often lifelong!

Insight gained: With there being so many routes to take within academia, it is important to explore each diligently as each is rewarding in its own way!

Emily Imes

DDS 2023

Mentor:
Dr. Jessica Lee

Project: Teaching track

Favorite moment/experience: I have loved meeting with Dr. Lee every other week. During this time we have been able to discuss a wide range of topics, and I am appreciative of the fellowship for emphasizing the importance of these conversations. I also had the opportunity to deliver a lecture to the D2 class; this both challenged and excited me, and it solidified my interest in this aspect of academia.

Insight gained: If you follow your genuine passions and interests, work won't feel like work, and success will follow.

Rand Khasawneh

DDS 2022
Mentor:
Dr. Jane Weintraub
Project: Teaching track
Favorite moment/experience: I was serving as a TA and I could tell that one of the students was struggling with the material because he was anxious. I acknowledged his anxiousness, told him to take a breath, and asked him to try again. He did much better after that. Helping students feel confident in themselves and their learning like faculty/residents have done for me has probably been my biggest draw to academia, so seeing the positive change in this student's demeanor was very impactful.
Insight gained: Academia is great for the curious - there are always new learning opportunities no matter what position you hold!

Taneisha Livingston

3rd Year Ortho Resident
Mentor:
Dr. Sylvia Frazier-Bowers
Project: Teaching track
Favorite moment/experience: Assisting with directing a predoctoral course has required both coaching and curriculum development, which have provided me with great insights into important aspects of academic life. Teaching has not only stretched and enriched my own understanding of orthodontics, but it has enhanced my ability to relate to people and understand their needs, and for that, I am so grateful!
Insight gained: I already knew that our faculty were amazing at navigating a challenging job with high expectations, but I now have a deeper understanding of just how selfless, dedicated, and humble one has to be in order to do this job well.

Sylvette Ramos-Diaz

DDS 2024
Mentor:
Dr. Apoena Ribeiro
Project: "Implementation of the Hispanic Oral Health Prevention & Education (H.O.P.E.) program at the Vidas de Esperanza dental clinic"
Favorite moment/experience: The American Dental Association (ADA) gave the Hispanic Oral Health Prevention & Education (H.O.P.E.) program a shoutout in their New Dentist Weekly newsletter on September 29th, a day after the Chatham News + Record published an article on H.O.P.E.
Insight gained: There are many obstacles along the way, but the impact you can make in the lives of patients will make the struggle worth it.

Amanda Swanson

DDS 2023
Mentor:
Dr. Tim Wright
Project: "Digital restorative approaches for developmental dental defects"
Favorite moment/experience: I had the incredible opportunity to serve as a student writer/moderator at the National Foundation for Ectodermal Dysplasias research conference in Charlotte. Interacting with clinicians and researchers from a variety of disciplines allowed me to witness firsthand how passionate teams can make a real difference in advancing outcomes for affected individuals and their families. I love that the academic environment is ripe for these types of collaborations.
Insight gained: The opportunities are endless; follow your passions and the rest will come.

Oh, the Places You'll Go!

An Interview with SRG Alumna Sarah Liebkemann

Nishma Vias

Sarah Liebkemann is a Registered Dental Hygienist and recent graduate of the Master of Science in Dental Hygiene Education program at the Adams School of Dentistry. She has served in various leadership roles in dental, public health, and interprofessional education organizations, including as co-president of SRG, and has received a number of awards for her research into the use of interactive virtual games for dental hygiene curriculum. This fall, Sarah began her appointment as Clinical Assistant Professor in Dental Hygiene and as Director of Communications with the Office of Interprofessional Education and Practice. We sat down with Sarah to discuss her journey, get advice for students conducting research at Adams, and review highlights of her time in SRG.

Q: Take us through your journey into your current role.

I went through the undergraduate dental hygiene program here at UNC and graduated in 2019. I originally went into dental hygiene because it was my fastest way to get involved with dentistry; I thought I would do dental school afterwards, but I fell in love with the research, academic, and public health sides of dental hygiene and I realized that I could achieve my goals more directly by going through an educational pathway in dental hygiene. Afterwards, I immediately went into the Master's program for dental hygiene education and graduated last spring, then I pretty quickly took on this role.

Q: Tell us a bit more about the research projects you're currently involved in.

It's nice that I'm able to build on some of the projects that I did as a student. A lot of the type of research that I'm involved in right now is educational research and it relates to using simulation and different software and virtual reality (VR) tools to simulate patient experiences. These can help students get more comfortable with the flow of a patient encounter and develop clinical judgement. A student might not be able to have a direct experience with certain [rare] conditions, but if that student is able to engage in VR circumstances that mimic real time appointments, that student may feel more confident accepting patients with those conditions upon graduation.

Q: What skills have you gained from being involved in research as a student?

One of the things I've taken away the most is being able to read through the literature and feel confident in my ability to analyze and extract what really matters out of it. I also feel like it's empowering to know that I have the ability to contribute to that as well – to explore a question fully and permanently add to the overall body of health knowledge that will go on to be a piece of what leads to people having healthier lives and better health outcomes.

Q: What is the biggest lesson that you've learned from your research experiences and time with SRG?

There are so many skills that are associated with teamwork and communication that are very important to develop when you do research. When working on a team with your peers, setting expectations for workloads and finding systems to hold each other accountable in a psychologically safe way is very important. When working with a mentor, keeping that relationship healthy, having open communication, and feeling comfortable talking to them about the kinds of obstacles you run into is important. Then when you are a student in your final years of study, you'll probably find opportunities where you're mentoring other students, so learning how to encourage people who are just starting out and could benefit from some guidance is important.

Q: Are there any misconceptions that you want to debunk about research?

I think the biggest myth that a lot of people believe that prevents them from getting started with research is that you have to spend tons and tons of hours doing lab work. That is a type of research and you should absolutely do it if that's the kind of thing you are interested in, but there's also research that involves seeing patients, working with students, education, and much more. It's worth it to try and see what types of opportunities out there might be suited to you.

Q: What would you tell a student who is starting or considering starting a research project?

Just go for it! I know it seems daunting at first, especially if you have no experience with research, but everyone starts in that place. You have to trust in yourself that you will figure it out. I remember when I was pursuing my first research project, there wasn't any infrastructure in the dental hygiene program at the time to support it, so I really needed to advocate for myself and build that pathway for it to be a possibility. It's great to partner with and learn from people who are further along in the process of "figuring it out." I have found that there are so many great resources and mentors here who will assist you … I think a lot of faculty really want to support passionate students who want to make a difference and want to go above and beyond. Also, starting research is not something that you have to do alone. I've been part of several research projects where it was just me and my friends who cared about the same thing deciding that we wanted to write a paper about it. It's a lot more manageable when you share the workload that way.

Q: What advice do you have for students who are engaging in research here at the school?

My biggest piece of advice is to get connected to the community. I know things are a little different right now with COVID, but we have such a vibrant research community here – students, faculty, and staff who are so dedicated to research and really love it – and that community is one of the most important pieces in keeping students interested and motivated in pursuing research projects.

Q: How would you go about connecting – reaching out by email, dropping by an office, etc.?

Absolutely, I would definitely email faculty who have experience in areas you're interested in and stop by for office hours. I felt being part of SRG was a huge part of what empowered me to have the confidence to do those things. The SRG would arrange mixers or social events that would provide the opportunity to make that initial connection, then I could continue the discussion from there.

Q: Any other bits of advice?

Apply for awards, scholarships, fellowships, and all of those things! You'd be surprised, a lot of times, you don't necessarily have to have every single thing figured out to be selected and the financial support you receive or the connections they help you make can really help jump start your project and figure out those pieces faster.

Q: Here's a fun one to wrap up with: what would you say is your favorite memory from your time in SRG?

There are so many, it's hard to pick! I think Dental Research Day in general holds a lot of really happy and fun memories for me and my time in SRG. The first year I went, I was a brand new student; I attended and saw my peers and other students presenting research posters and I felt inspired. The next year, I had completed my first research project and had my own poster, so it was a cool experience to be on the other side. Then the last one, in 2020, was especially memorable. Colin [LaPrade] and I were co-presidents that year, so we were a lot more involved in the planning process. I was organizing the sessions and helping people set up their posters, and it was so neat to see that growth year after year. People are so supportive and it's great to see your friends and the projects they've been working on. It's just a really fun time!

SPRING 2022

SAVE THE DATE

SRG Poster & Abstract Workshop

January 6, 2022

March 2, 2022

UNC Dental Research Day

Coming Soon...

SRG Journal Club

Skylar McGaughey

Understanding the value and application of dental research to clinical experiences is a critical component of dental education. However, it is often difficult for students to explore research if they are not actively involved in a project. Two dental students, Margaret McGuire and Will Church, created a new opportunity that combats this challenge and encourages students to engage with research in a new way: a journal club.

In January 2022, UNC Student Research Group (SRG) will officially launch the SRG Journal Club. Led by McGuire and Church, SRG will partner with a club or interest group in the dental school each month to discuss a research paper relevant to the group's interests. "There is something to be said for seeing lots of different ways of presenting research," says McGuire, who also led a systematic review discussion in Fall 2021 with the UNC American Academy of Public Health Dentistry (AAPHD) chapter on oral health instruction during pregnancy. The meeting with AAPHD gave her insight on leading an effective journal discussion, and she and Church are prepared to organize more research discussions as founders of the SRG Journal Club next year.

The new SRG Journal Club is open to all interested students, and the sessions are designed to offer useful information for everyone from all backgrounds and levels of research experience. "Sometimes you don't know what information is helpful to you until you are in the moment," says McGuire. We can all learn something from these meetings, whether our learning is related to research methods, a new material or technique to try in clinic, or our colleagues' observations. When asked about her goals for the group, McGuire says "if we have one journal club a month and people come to it and find it helpful, that is the goal… we want to try to pique people's scientific curiosities." With this thought in mind, SRG is very excited for the SRG Journal Club launch! We look forward to seeing all the fruitful discussions, engagement, and connections made possible by this new opportunity.

Happy Holidays!

from UNC SRG