Delivering Care at a Critical Time
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The Harvard Dental Bulletin is published twice a year for alumni and friends of Harvard School of Dental Medicine. We look forward to receiving your feedback and news.

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Students, faculty, and staff in clinical care roles were excited to get COVID-19 vaccinations in January 2021. Jessica Latimer, DMSc24 (periodontology), said “I wanted to lead by example and do my part to protect the health of my community.” HSDM has remained extremely safe with high vaccination rates and weekly testing of nearly 400 onsite community members.
Dear Alumni and Friends,

It was just over a year ago that COVID-19 upended our world and changed our lives and our school in ways we never imagined. The pandemic shifted our work and priorities, and at times tested our ability to persevere. Despite these significant challenges, our community found new ways to connect virtually, new methods to learn, and new appreciation for our work and mission. Our faculty, staff, students, and alumni have showed tremendous resilience and demonstrated great care and support for each other during these difficult times—a true hallmark of our tightknit community.

As vaccination rates rise and restrictions begin to lift, I am optimistic that this spring and summer will bring new hope and vitality to our campus once again. Already, we’re encouraged to see our new practice in Cambridge attracting an incredible number of patients since its opening in early February. You’ll find more details about this exciting venture in this issue. Throughout the pandemic, we continued to emphasize the importance of access to care and maintaining oral health, and kept our clinics running with enhanced safety protocols in place. I’m proud that we hosted Give Kids a Smile (GKAS) to provide care to kids at a critical time. You will learn how our students and faculty found innovative new ways to expand GKAS with teledentistry visits for entire families.

Another bright spot this spring has been the fulfillment of the Freeman, Grant, Franklin Scholarship which will help underrepresented minority students with financial need pursue their DMD degree at HSDM. The outpouring of support from alumni and friends inspired a capstone gift which will now enable us to provide financial support for an incoming DMD student beginning this year. I’m extremely grateful to all those who made this possible. You’ll hear from a few of the scholarship’s supporters on why they gave to this important cause.

This time of year, we look forward to events such as Commencement, Class Day, Reunion, and Alumni Day. These celebrations, planned months in advance, will take place virtually due to University and public health guidelines; however, we hope that the virtual format will allow alumni and friends from greater distances to join us. By this summer, we look forward to welcoming our incoming pre-and-postdoctoral students to begin their programs in person—an exciting step for them, and for us, as we return to more in-person programming.

I am very hopeful that we are turning a corner, and brighter days are ahead. Thank you for your continued support and goodwill, and for all you do for HSDM.

William V. Giannobile, DDS, DMSc’96, PD’96
Dean, Harvard School of Dental Medicine
Harvard Dental Center Expands Into Cambridge

In February 2021, Harvard School of Dental Medicine opened its first practice in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Harvard Dental Center-Cambridge (HDCC), located at 114 Mount Auburn Street, replaced a dental practice previously operated by Harvard University Health Services (HUHS) at the same location that closed at the end of 2020. In anticipation of its opening, the practice had a waiting list of over 850 patients.

“We’re thrilled with the outpouring of support and patient interest in this practice,” said Dean William Giannobile. “The new practice in Cambridge is a stunning, state-of-the-art facility and we couldn’t be more excited to expand the footprint of the Harvard Dental Center in this new location.”

The practice serves members of the Harvard community including employees, students, and retirees, and also welcomes new patients from the surrounding Cambridge community and beyond.

“It was certainly a risk to open a new practice during a pandemic, but we saw a unique opportunity to fill a critical gap in care at a time when continuity of oral healthcare and maintaining overall health is so vital. It is also very much at the heart of HSDM’s clinical and educational mission,” he added.

As the only graduate school of Harvard to offer direct patient care in practices within the Harvard Dental Center in the Longwood Medical Area, HSDM was well suited to take on the challenge.

“It expands the clinical opportunities for members of our community and they’ll be assured of getting absolutely first-rate oral health care,” said Harvard University President Larry Bacow. “What really excites me are the opportunities that this might represent for further
collaboration between the Cambridge campus and the dental school. One could easily imagine undergraduates who might have an interest in oral health care finding ways to engage with the clinic, with faculty, and with students from the dental school who are working there. I think it’s very exciting,” he said.

Under the direction of HSDM, the scope of dental services offered at the Cambridge location is expanding to include specialties such as implant dentistry, oral surgery, orthodontics, prosthodontics, and other specialties not previously available at the HUHS clinic. Drs. Bernard Friedland, German Gallucci, Neil Griseto, Negin Katebi, DMSc16, Tien Jiang, DMD14, and Jason Lee, MMSc13, from the Longwood location have begun seeing patients at the Cambridge location to meet the demand for specialty services.

“The HDCC was designed to provide comprehensive oral care with the latest technology and modern treatment concepts. The multidisciplinary approach to oral health makes the practice one-of-a-kind, where patients can find all the solutions for their dental needs at one location,” said German Gallucci, associate professor and chair of Restorative Dentistry and Biomaterials Sciences, and executive director of the Harvard Dental Center.

HSDM was also able to retain several of the providers and staff from the HUHS practice who were highly-regarded by their patients. Providers Drs. Benjamin Costa, Kathryn Ferrante, and Michael Palys, MMSc13, and staff members Malvina Blashkevich, Hope Jeanty, and Marsilda Lega, joined the Harvard Dental Center Cambridge. Miran Velagic from the Harvard Dental Center in Longwood transferred to the Cambridge practice to manage day-to-day operations on site.

Staff from HSDM’s Administration and Finance, IT and Compliance, Human Resources, Communications, and HDC Leadership teams worked quickly to open the practice within a few months of the transition from HUHS, and continue to ensure it is equipped to succeed.

“Our staff and faculty have shown great dedication in providing care in our practices throughout the pandemic. The new practice in Cambridge offers great promise for our School to expand care to the Harvard community and offer greater clinical and educational opportunities. I’m very enthusiastic about the possibilities ahead for HSDM, and I look forward to everyone being part of the success of the expanded practices,” Giannobile said.
Scholarship Represents a ‘Decisive Step Forward’ Toward Greater Equity in Dentistry

Beginning this year, Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM) will be able to offer scholarship support to dental students from underrepresented minority backgrounds with financial need through the Freeman, Grant, Franklin Scholarship. The endowed fund was activated in January with a capstone gift made by the Colgate-Palmolive Company and it has also been supported by alumni and other members of the HSDM community who are dedicated to expanding diversity in dentistry.

The first scholarship will be awarded to a student beginning their predoctoral (DMD) program in the 2021 academic year and continue on an annual basis, helping HSDM admit the best and brightest students regardless of their financial means.

“I am thrilled to see this scholarship become a reality,” said Dolores Mercedes Franklin, DMD74, PD76, one of the trailblazers for whom the scholarship is named.

“This represents a decisive step forward in the struggle to achieve our longstanding goal of equity for predoctoral students from underrepresented racial minorities in dentistry.”

–Dr. Mercedes Franklin

“It holds the promise of attracting highly-qualified students and preparing them to be global leaders—leaders in their fields dedicated to improving human health, and in doing so, addressing health disparities,” said Franklin.

The Freeman, Grant, Franklin Scholarship pays tribute to Franklin, the first African American
woman to graduate from HSDM, and other prominent African American figures in HSDM’s history including Robert Tanner Freeman, DMD1869, the first African American in the United States to graduate from a dental school in 1869, and George Franklin Grant, DMD1870, the first African American faculty member of Harvard University and the School in 1884.

“The Harvard School of Dental Medicine has a long legacy of embracing diversity. Colgate’s generous support will help further our ethos to promote greater diversity, inclusion, and belonging in dental education and in oral health research.”

—Dean William Giannobile

Despite representing more than one-third of the U.S. population, Black and Hispanic dentists and those who identify as another race or ethnicity only represent a combined nine percent of professionals in the industry, according to the American Dental Association (ADA).

Communities that lack access to oral health often have higher rates of periodontal disease, as well as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. These same communities have been hit disproportionately hard by COVID-19, underscoring the urgency of accessible care.

Colgate, which made a donation in 2016 to kick off fundraising for the scholarship, has now contributed a total of $210,000 helping HSDM reach a total of $250,000 to activate the scholarship.

“Increasing diversity among the dental workforce is critical to our goal of realizing a cavity-free future for all,” said Noel Wallace, chairman, president, and chief executive officer of Colgate-Palmolive. “Colgate understands our opportunity—and responsibility—to make oral health more equitable and accessible around the world.”

Dr. Robert Tanner Freeman’s Portrait Installed at HSDM

The HSDM community gathered virtually in February to celebrate the installation of Dr. Robert Tanner Freeman’s portrait in HSDM’s main lobby. Dr. Freeman, DMD1869, a son of former slaves, was a member of HSDM’s inaugural class. Upon his graduation from HSDM, Dr. Freeman became the first African American graduate of the School, as well as the first African American to graduate from a dental school in the U.S. In 2019, the School commissioned artist Stephen Coit to paint Dr. Freeman’s portrait.

“We’re thrilled to be able to install Dr. Freeman’s portrait alongside portraits of other prominent figures in HSDM’s history, and we will continue to expand on this initiative to make the artwork adorning the School’s walls more reflective of its diverse past and promising future,” said Dean Giannobile.

At the event, “Inspirational Black Trailblazers in Dentistry: The Installation of Dr. Freeman’s Portrait,” student representatives recognized several of HSDM’s Black alumni, and Dr. Brian Swann, MPH08, assistant professor of Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology shared a powerful reflection on inspirational Black trailblazers in dentistry, dental education, and public health.
Give Kids a Smile Delivers Care at a Critical Time

Smiles on the faces of patients and providers were still discernible even through layers of masks and PPE at Harvard School of Dental Medicine’s recent Give Kids a Smile (GKAS) event. The annual event, held each February during Children’s Dental Health Month, offers an opportunity for kids ages one to 17 to receive free dental care.

Stephanie, a mother who brought in four-year-old Ellie for her first appointment, watched as her daughter received care from dental students. “She was scared at first but now she’s all chatty. This is awesome!”

DMD student organizers Ziwei Chen, DMD23, Kadriye E. Hargett, DMD24, and Jessica K. Murphree, DMD23, planned and promoted this year’s event working closely with faculty and student volunteers. While COVID-19 safety protocols changed the delivery of care this year, the organizers were committed to hosting the event due to the critical need for dental care. HSDM was the only dental school in Boston offering the event this year, and filled the gap for families seeking care.

“The pandemic has created financial strain and has further contributed to a lack of access to dental care for many individuals,” Ziwei Chen said. “Preventative dental care is always important for all patients; however, children are a vulnerable population whose normal day-to-day routines have been turned upside down. GKAS gave us the opportunity to detect changes in oral hygiene habits and dental problems early so that these kids will not have a dental emergency as an additional distraction from their life and learning,” she said.

In-person appointments were capped at 24 patients to allow for social distancing on the clinic floor in the Harvard Dental Center’s Teaching Practices; however,
virtual teledentistry appointments were offered to 75 families which allowed providers to expand care beyond the clinic and accommodate more than three times the number of patients virtually.

According to Dr. Sang Park, associate dean for Dental Education and associate professor of Restorative Dentistry and Biomaterials Sciences, HSDM was one of the first dental schools to pioneer the teledentistry concept at GKAS.

“The entire family can be seen without having to leave their house,” Park said. “These virtual visits allow us to answer their most immediate dental questions and ultimately help families find a dental home.”

Patients who were seen virtually at the event were also offered follow-up visits to receive free in-person care at a later date.

“I am proud that we were able to coordinate with HSDM staff and faculty to host virtual appointments this year. I’m glad we could try something new to provide one more avenue of oral care to the public,” Jessica K. Murphree said.

Give Kids a Smile offers an educational component as well. This year, DMD students found creative ways to share lessons about oral health topics they would usually share in person by creating videos on dental hygiene and diet, proper brushing and flossing methods, and the importance of a dental home and regular x-rays.

“In addition to being a cherished tradition, GKAS is a special opportunity for HSDM as an institution to give back to the communities that we serve,” said Chen.
Paying It Forward

Love Found at HSDM Inspires Meaningful Gifts

In August of 2004, Michael Bundy, DMD08, and Alice Kim-Bundy, DMD08, arrived at Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM) for their predoctoral orientation as strangers. Both came to Boston in search of a dental education, but left four years later not only with a degree but with their future spouse.

“There is definitely something in the water at 188 Longwood Avenue! HSDM is unrivaled in creating classes that are made up of genuinely good-hearted people. It’s not surprising that so many end up together,” said Michael. “HSDM has given me not only the very best dental education possible, but it has also given me the absolute best person I have ever met. From our first meeting during orientation, to our first date in the anatomy lab, to our proposal in front of Countway Library, Harvard has very much been a part of our relationship.”

After graduating from HSDM, Michael completed a residency in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at UCLA School of Dentistry. He began working at Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center in the Department of Maxillofacial Surgery shortly after completing his residency, and continues to work there today. Alice completed a two-year residency in Pediatric Dentistry at Boston Children’s Hospital before moving to Los Angeles. Alice currently works as a pediatric dentist for two private practices. The pair married in 2011 and reside in Los Angeles with their three children.

The Bundys share a unique bond with their graduating class as well. The DMD Class of 2008 is quite connected, even more than a decade after leaving HSDM. Through career changes, marriages, family, loss, and beyond, the connection shared by the Bundys and their classmates has undoubtedly helped foster a continued commitment to HSDM and its current students.

“The bonds that were forged amongst the Class of 2008 are truly special. As a group, we have been very intentional with regards to maintaining close relationships,” said Alice and Michael. “To be able to call upon classmates to support you and your family is invaluable. It is inspiring to see how our classmates have risen
to the top of their respective fields and to be able to collaborate on cases.”

Last fall when HSDM launched a fundraising challenge to help fund the Freeman, Grant, Franklin Scholarship, Michael and Alice not only made a gift to the Scholarship; they encouraged their classmates to do the same. Nearly 30 percent of the Class of 2008 made a gift to the Scholarship, contributing to its fulfillment and activation.

“We joined the challenge because HSDM gave me a chance when other comparable schools did not,” Michael said in a message to alumni. “My journey to HSDM began when I spent a summer in public health research under the guidance of Dr. Chester Douglass. That’s when I discovered that HSDM is a special place. Because of HSDM’s commitment to the recruitment and retention of underrepresented minorities and the kindness of mentors like Dr. Douglass, Alice and I were able to enjoy success at the School and beyond. We are forever grateful.”

Both Alice and Michael feel strongly about supporting underrepresented minorities who are pursuing a dental education. Research indicates that a shortage in underrepresented minorities in healthcare often leads to disparities in care amongst underrepresented minority communities. When making the decision to support the Freeman, Grant, Franklin Scholarship last fall, the Bundys considered the impact that increased diversity in dentistry can have on underrepresented minority communities.

“There is a great need for underrepresented minorities in all fields of healthcare. Supporting these students improves the education and academic experience of all HSDM students,” said Michael. “It also helps to ensure that there will be more underrepresented minority practitioners that are statistically more likely to care for minority patients.”

Alice and Michael are acutely aware of the role that alumni play in providing that support. The couple has prioritized their support as alumni partially because of the important connections that they were able to make as students at HSDM, and continue to make with other alumni.

“Outside of the School itself, there is nothing more important in advancing HSDM’s mission than its alumni community,” said Michael. “I owe my career to a fellow HSDM alumnus, Harry C. Schwartz, DMD71, MD71, PD76, who mentored me after graduating from the School. He is also responsible for my current role at Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center. Alice is also working with an HSDM alum, Jessie Schwarz, DMD02, PD04, at Santa Monica Dentistry for Children.”

As another group of eager young dentists prepares to graduate from HSDM this May, Alice and Michael reflected not only their time as students, but in the years that followed. “We would advise the graduating Class of 2021 to take good care of yourselves and of each other. HSDM is very much a family and as alumni, you represent it too.”
Dental Students Fill the Gap in Online Learning

Two years ago, before COVID-19 upended in-person learning, a team of five Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM) DMD students had the idea of creating “My Dental Key”—an online platform with step-by-step video tutorials of dental procedures to supplement clinical and classroom learning. After launching the platform with 30 instructional videos in November 2020, My Dental Key has quickly amassed over 3,000 users and 350 active subscribers from around the globe, and is gaining the attention of a growing number of dental students and educators.

“Online teaching is here to stay,” said fourth-year dental student Karen He, My Dental Key’s chief financial officer.

“In light of COVID, schools have realized how important it is to have robust online resources to introduce dental students to clinical dentistry.”

Traditional dental education takes place in the classroom, preclinical lab, and clinic; however, the team found that over 80 percent of the 700 U.S. dental students they surveyed used YouTube to review dental preparations and procedures. They identified an opportunity to create instructional videos from a student perspective with content verified by dental educators to ensure accuracy.

“We saw a need for our generation to have access to modern videos and technology, while learning and developing their clinical skills in dental school,” said Leela Breitman, My Dental Key CEO.

After long days in dental school, the team spent nights sketching illustrations of procedures and dabbling with video recordings to hone their production skills. Two of the management team members, Leela Breitman, DMD21, and Alice Li, DMD23, have backgrounds in art and medical illustration. The other founders, Jennifer Lee, DMD21, Karen He, DMD21, and Emily Van Doren, DMD22, have experience in...
education, investment banking, fundraising, research, and web design.

The team built a prototype of the My Dental Key platform with funding and support from the Harvard Initiative for Learning and Teaching (HILT) and the American Dental Education Association (ADEA). More recently, the team received additional grant funding from the Harvard Undergraduate Capital Partners Innovation Fund, a HILT Launch Pad Operation Impact 2020 Grand Prize, the Dr. Edward B. Shils Entrepreneurial Fund, and a Harvard Innovation Labs Spark Grant.

This year, they will be competing for a second time in Harvard’s President’s Innovation Challenge (PIC) in the high-tech business-to-business track as one of 25 finalists out of more than 420 contenders. The winning venture will be announced on May 5, 2021.

“We have made so much progress since last year’s PIC competition,” Breitman said. “We’re so proud of our progress and are excited to grow alongside the other incredible teams in the PIC.”

They credit business and academic mentors and other collaborators who encouraged them along the way. During the pandemic, the team also took advantage of the ubiquity of Zoom to break down geographic barriers and collaborate with students from other dental schools including Tufts University and the University of Maryland.

“Being able to work with students and faculty at other schools has been the key to growing our platform,” Jennifer Lee, My Dental Key chief operating officer, said. “It’s helped to increase and diversify the content we offer.”

During the last year, the team members also published two manuscripts in the Journal of Dental Education related to online dental education, ran a pilot of their platform at Harvard, and presented at ADEA’s annual national meeting on the topic of online dental education and the utility of their platform during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I’m proud that we are an all-female management team. We don’t often toot our own horn, but from last year to this year we’ve grown from five team members to 15, and we’ve gone from a test platform only shared within Harvard to a live platform with a growing number of users,” said He.

The team monitors traffic to the website from all over the world. Currently, some content on the site is available for free, and some is subscription-based. Their goal is to continue to grow the number of subscribers and attract dental schools to the platform.

“We have over 350 subscribers to our website. These are people we can reach out to and we’ve gotten a lot of great feedback that way,” said Emily Van Doren, My Dental Key chief information officer.

As part of their mission to democratize dental education, they plan to offer free subscriptions to students in developing countries.

“My Dental Key is a resource that dental students worldwide want and need,” said Alice Li, My Dental Key chief marketing officer.

Three of the founding team members will graduate from HSDM this year and go on to residencies across the country. Lee will go into pediatric dentistry, Breitman into prosthodontics, and He into oral surgery. Despite being physically apart, they expect to continue to keep growing the platform at a rapid pace.

“When we are no longer students ourselves, we want to keep involving students in growing My Dental Key. They are really fundamental to our model,” said Breitman. “This content is truly built by students, for students.”
Myron Allukian, Jr., MPH67, PD69, has faced adversity before. He served in Vietnam in a Marine Division field hospital mass casualty unit, worked in harsh conditions in orphanages, villages, and refugee camps, and fought tirelessly to promote fluoridation and oral health. As a public health expert, he took every precaution during the COVID-19 pandemic, but nothing prepared him for the battle he would face with the virus that would nearly take his life. On April 1, 2020, he was rushed to the emergency room and put on a ventilator for 17 days.

“I had a very close call with COVID. I almost died. I was in the hospital then rehab for 10 weeks, lost 35 pounds and my pony tail. I am lucky to be alive,” he said.

While he remains at home regaining his strength, he has had time to reflect on a 57-year career dedicated to improving the lives of others. At age 82, he said, “I am still active, tireless, and fearless—looking for ways to make a difference.”

Making a difference has been his mantra since his early career in the military. The transformative experiences in Vietnam would set his course for a career in public health. Working in orphanages, schools, villages, and refugee camps, he discovered his purpose.

“This is the kind of dentist I want to be. One who makes a difference in the lives of human beings—kids and adults who live with pain and suffering every day,” he said.

When he entered the master’s program in public health at Harvard with the intention of pursuing a career in international dentistry in developing countries, he soon learned that the dental needs in Massachusetts were more dire than those in Vietnam. He then decided to make an impact closer to home in his own community.

“In 1968, Massachusetts teenagers had six times more tooth decay than Vietnamese teens,” he said.

The son of immigrants (his mother an Armenian Genocide survivor) he was raised in Boston’s South End.
He graduated from Boston Latin School and became a first-generation college student graduating from Tufts College, then the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine. He became an early proponent of community water fluoridation in Massachusetts and took an active role advocating for its use across the Commonwealth. As a result of his efforts, he helped change the mandatory state referendum fluoridation law and Massachusetts went from seven percent to 63 percent fluoridated, reaching nearly four million people. He later chaired the U.S. Surgeon General’s Work Group on Fluoridation raising it as a national priority.

Today, he notes that if there is one silver lining to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is that there is now a greater focus on the importance of public health. “People weren’t paying attention to public health infrastructure,” he said.

This is familiar territory for Allukian. Much of his career was spent building oral health infrastructure as the City of Boston’s Dental Director, and as Chair of the Massachusetts State Dental Board. Determined to draw attention to oral health care and prevention, he spearheaded the effort to establish dental programs at community health centers with the help of HSDM students and faculty. The first health center dental program he established was the Bunker Hill Health Center Dental Program affiliated with Massachusetts General Hospital in Charlestown, MA.

“The Bunker Hill Health Center Dental Program became the model for the rest of the city, and we ended up with 19 community health center dental programs in Boston with over 100,000 patient visits a year for children and adults, and now there are over 600,000 dental visits at health centers statewide,” he said.

Allukian continued to fight for public health issues impacting the most vulnerable. In the 1990s he chaired the statewide tobacco control planning committee to target smoking. He also initiated the Boston Tobacco Control which was successful in eventually limiting smoking in Boston’s restaurants and bars, and tightening the ability of minors to buy cigarettes.

“Our state was the first to decrease teenage smoking in the U.S,” he said.

He was also on the leading edge of providing care to HIV/AIDS patients in the alarming early days of the epidemic in the 1980s when fear of catching AIDS from patients kept many providers from treating them.

“We led the movement to get the dental profession and dental schools in Boston to treat AIDS patients and to get the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to come out with infection control guidelines. At that time, HSDM was the only dental school in Boston treating AIDS patients,” Allukian said.

He was also active on the national stage serving as president of the American Public Health Association (APHA) and working with politicians such as Senator Ted Kennedy to get oral health included in national health care reform and have dental public health residencies funded by Congress. He is also a member of the National Academy of Medicine, and the National Academy of Sciences.

Today’s dental students are still learning from Allukian and benefiting from the programs he established. He is a part-time corresponding member of the HSDM faculty in Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology, and remains an active speaker and author on a range of dental and public health topics. In December, he initiated and co-authored an op-ed on behalf of APHA past presidents on the need for a national action plan to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reflecting on his career, Allukian’s advice for today’s dental school graduates is to think beyond their role as dentists. “Widen your view. Know what’s going on in the world. Get involved in the community in some way. You’re a health professional and you're in a position to give back to those most in need and to make a world of difference.”
Flipping the Script on Dental Education

What happens when you take a hands-on, interactive dental curriculum and turn it upside down?

Several new publications in the Journal of Dental Education authored by HSDM faculty and students reveal how dental education during the COVID-19 pandemic rapidly adapted to deliver aspects of the curriculum in virtual ways. The authors took a close look at what worked well, and what needed improvement, to inform how to best deliver dental education in new and uncharted territory.

“Dental education has a very interactive curriculum and invaluable aspects to faculty-student interactions that can never be replaced. However, we needed to establish effective alternative educational environments and tools,” said lead author and project leader Hiroe Ohyama, MMSc’96, DMD’03, assistant professor of Restorative Dentistry and Biomaterials Sciences.

Ohyama immediately recognized that her students felt distant, both literally and figuratively, and realized they needed more communication and to be included in the process of examining new learning models.

“We conducted several survey studies remotely, but together. We learned the importance of minimizing student fatigue and improving student engagement during remote lectures, and the advantage of faculty giving lectures with more case-based interactive activities, among other findings,” said Ohyama.

In the publication “Student Perceptions of Distance Learning Strategies During COVID-19,” the authors documented the reality of “Zoom fatigue” that has led to student burnout and a perceived decrease in engagement and material retention.

“The major findings highlight the need to incorporate interactive components to online classes like case-based components, small group discussions, and ungraded quizzes, and utilizing technology to enhance..."
“We learned the importance of minimizing student fatigue and improving student engagement during remote lectures, and the advantage of faculty giving lectures with more case-based interactive activities, among other findings.”

—Dr. Hiroe Ohyama

the experience such as 3D models and Zoom tools like polling and breakout rooms,” said Emily Chen, DMD21, and Kristie Kaczmarek, DMD23.

“The most surprising finding was that students reported similar comfort participating during recorded and non-recorded lectures. Students emphasized the utility of re-watching recorded lectures for clarification,” added Kaczmarek.

In the publication “Students’ Perceptions on Dental Education in the Wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic” students Emily Van Doren, DMD22, Jennifer Lee, DMD21, and Leela S Breitman, DMD21, looked at the intersection of COVID-19 with the growing role of digital and internet technologies in dental academia.

They discovered that digital and online technologies are playing an increasingly important role in predoctoral dental education but that their efficacy and application varied between class years. Their findings pointed to online educational tools being most helpful to students in the preclinical portion of their dental education.

“We believe that online educational technology is a powerful tool that can be harnessed to dramatically improve dental education in and beyond the coronavirus pandemic. We hope that our research encourages dental educators to explore applications of these new and innovative technologies in the dental classroom,” said Van Doren, Lee, and Breitman.

Tackling online learning was one challenge; testing the retention of that new knowledge is another. The OSCE (objective structured clinical examination), an assessment that measures clinical competence by physically rotating students through multiple stations, can be daunting for students even in normal conditions, but with the School closed for in-person exams, faculty had to devise a method to administer the OSCE remotely.

In the publication, “Implementing an Online OSCE During the COVID-19 Pandemic,” faculty authors Rahen Kakadia and Hiroe Ohyama shared the tools and techniques they used to creatively restructure the OSCE, and student Emily Chen, DMD21, provided a student perspective. Kakadia, along with supporting staff from the Office of Dental Education, used Zoom breakout rooms, and rotated students through private virtual sessions.

“We rallied the efforts of faculty and staff to use Zoom in an innovative way, and the OSCE was a success overall for both faculty and students,” said Chen. “We wanted to provide other educators with our process and lessons learned so that this project could contribute to the improvement of dental education for years to come.”

HSDM faculty and students continue to collaborate on additional publications that will inform the future of dental education. The collaborators thus far include: predoctoral students Ariana Aram, DMD2023, Leela Breitman, DMD21, Emily Chen, DMD2021, Kasey Ha, DMD21, Kristie Kaczmarek, DMD23, Jennifer Lee, DMD21, Emily Van Doren, DMD22; resident Natalie Inoue, MMSc22; staff and faculty members Supattriya Chutinan, Rahen Kakadia, Austin Lee, and Hiroe Ohyama.

“I greatly appreciate all the students who have participated in and supported this research,” Ohyama said. “I would also like to thank our supportive HSDM leadership and contributing faculty and staff who continue to make distance learning successful during the pandemic.”
Wampanoag Outreach Group Honored with Community Service Award

Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM) community outreach group recently received the Harvard Medical School (HMS) Dean’s Community Service Award for their work to provide better access to oral and systemic health care to the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (WTGH), as well as other underserved communities on the island of Martha’s Vineyard. The Wampanoag Outreach Group Portable Clinic Project, spearheaded by HSDM students and faculty members Camille Herzog, DMD22; Natalie Wen, DMD22; Susanna Yeh, DMD23; Kristie Kaczmarek, DMD23; and Brian Swann, MPH08, assistant professor of Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology; were recognized for creating a portable dental clinic plan after the island’s existing clinic at Martha’s Vineyard Hospital closed.

The Wampanoag Outreach Group (WOG) began building a relationship with the Wampanoag Tribe in 2012 and has provided over $70,000 of dental care since 2014. The group has remained committed to improving access to care and raising awareness of the Tribe’s unique oral and primary healthcare challenges. Although the Martha’s Vineyard Hospital dental clinic closed in 2020, the WOG has continued to build its relationship with the Tribe by traveling to local powwows and designing a portable clinic for care delivery.

“The Wampanoag Outreach Group has been working diligently for almost a decade on establishing sustainable dental care on the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) tribal land, said Natalie Wen, DMD22. “As we have learned from our public health faculty and as other colleagues involved in outreach have experienced, connecting with a community takes significant time, patience, workforce, and resources. Receiving this award is truly a huge step forward as we continue working with the Tribe.”

While visits have been temporarily suspended due to COVID-19, each visit typically includes one or two HSDM faculty members and up to four dental students. Students assist with dental procedures, including extractions, cleanings, restorations, dentures and more. Over the years, the Wampanoag Tribe has invited students and faculty to participate in several Wampanoag powwows and tribal meetings to learn more about the community and culture.

“Working with the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) gives HSDM students the opportunity to volunteer and think outside of the HMS/HSDM bubble on real-world issues,” shared Camille Herzog, DMD22. “We are able to collaborate with members of the WTGH community to help tackle disparities in oral health access that are impacting individuals every day. We work intimately with the Tribe to support their efforts to increase access to oral health care.”

The HMS Dean’s Community Service Award was established in 1999 and recognizes individuals whose commitment to community service has made a positive impact on the local, national, or international community. HMS donates $1,000 to the organizations served by award recipients.

“This award honors not only our current work with the Tribe, but also the culmination of work by many students and Tribal members before our current leadership,” said Herzog. “We are very grateful to have additional funds to support our future work with the Tribe to build a portable oral health clinic on Tribal land.”

Wen added, “Participating in this group and immersing ourselves within the Wampanoag culture has been such a humbling experience. We are all very grateful for the support from the HMS and HSDM communities and the continued trust the Tribe gives us.”
We are grateful to the following individuals and organizations for gifts received during the 2020 calendar year, from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020.

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Henry Warren made the first planned gift to HSDM in 1899 in the form of a bequest for $10,000.00. The school is grateful to those who have expressed their intention to provide for HSDM in their financial planning. To recognize this thoughtfulness, the School established the Henry C. Warren Society.

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We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of these lists. Please let us know of any errors or omissions so that we may correct our records. Email: bulletin@hsdm.harvard.edu, or call 617-432-1533. Degrees listed reflect HSDM and affiliated degrees only.

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Satheesh Elangovan, DMSc11, PD11, received the 2020 Evidence-Based Dentistry (EBD) Mid-Career Faculty Award from the American Dental Association and the American Association for Dental Research, for his contributions to EBD through his scholarly and teaching pursuits. Elangovan is a professor in the Department of Periodontics at the University of Iowa College of Dentistry.

Ron Fried, MMSc86, PD86, received the 2021 Clinician of the Year award at this year’s Yankee Dental Congress. Fried is a Diplomate of the American Board of Periodontology and an assistant professor of Oral Medicine, Infection and Immunity part-time at HSDM. He maintains a private practice in Brookline, MA.

Erinne Kennedy, PD18, MMSc19, was honored with the American Dental Association’s 10 Under 10 Award. The award recognizes new dentists for their work in advocacy, leadership, philanthropy, and education. Kennedy’s work integrates public health work into dental education. She serves as an assistant professor and director of pre-doctoral education at Kansas City University’s College of Dental Medicine and is a part-time lecturer in the Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology department at HSDM.

Kwan Kew Lai, DMD77, recently published “Into Africa, Out of Academia: A Doctor’s Memoir.” The pandemic has temporarily stopped her overseas volunteerism most recently in war-torn Yemen, but she continues to volunteer domestically as a doctor, and works with the Navajo Nation, hard hit by COVID-19.

Cataldo Leone, DMSc89, PD89, was named interim dean of Boston University’s (BU) Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine. Leone joined the faculty at BU as an associate professor in periodontology and oral biology in 1999 and has spent the last 22 years at BU. He is an expert on education and curriculum design.

Lonnie Norris, DMD76, MPH77, received the American College of Dentists’ Thomas F. Winkler Leadership Award for his leadership and dedication to the dental profession. The award was presented at this year’s 2021 American College of Dentists New England Section (ACD) Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony. “I am very honored to receive this prestigious recognition by the New England Section of the American College of Dentists,” said Norris, who is Dean Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery of Tufts School of Dental Medicine. “I always value my education at Harvard School of Dental Medicine and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health as an essential foundation of my knowledge and opportunities to advance my professional career.”

Kalie McCulloch, DMD18, and Jacob Taylor, DMD18, recently announced their engagement. After graduating from HSDM in 2018, residencies took them both to the West Coast. McCulloch pursued Prosthodontics at University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA), and Taylor pursued a residency in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at UCLA. Congratulations to the happy couple!

Sonia E. Molina, DMD89, MPH89, has been appointed to the Dental Board of California. Molina has been a dentist and president at Molina Endodontics since 1992. She is a member of the California Dental Association, Clinica Romero, and the Harvard Club of Southern California.
Richard Valachovic, MPH81, SM82, PD82, will receive the Shils 2020 Excellence in Academia Award for his successful stewardship of @adeaweb and lifelong commitment of strengthening and expanding dental education throughout the world. After retiring from serving as president and CEO of the American Dental Education Association in 2019, he spent a year on sabbatical and recently joined the New York University (NYU) College of Dentistry as the founding director of the new NYU Dentistry Center for Oral Health Policy and Management.

HSDM alumni reunited for the wedding of Chad Sears, DMD03, on September 25, 2020. Sears is pictured with Cara Lund, DMD03, and Carolyn Coppe Peacock, DMD04, pediatric dentist with Coppe and Sears Pediatric Dental and Orthodontic Practice.

Lisa Simon, DMD14, PD15, MD20, was the recipient of the Lucy Hobbs Project’s Woman to Watch award, which recognized her work ensuring oral health equity by integrating medical and dental systems. She has procured grants to pilot the assimilation of oral health services into hospital wards, primary care settings, and clinics for incarcerated populations. Simon has developed oral health education curricula for practicing primary care clinicians, as well as medical and nursing students, and conducts research on the impact of oral health on overall health.

In Remembrance

Marjorie Jeffcoat, DMD76, PD78, a distinguished alumna, trailblazer, and scholar in dental medicine, passed away in November 2020. Dr. Jeffcoat served as associate professor of periodontology, director of postdoctoral education, and head of the diagnostic systems and biotechnology department at HSDM, where she taught periodontology for 10 years. She was later recruited to the University of Alabama School of Dentistry, where she became assistant dean of research and professor and chair of the Department of Periodontics for nearly 16 years. In 2003, she was named professor and dean of the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine, in which she served until 2008 before returning to teaching. She also served as president of the American Association of Dental Research (AADR) and of the IADR.

Student News

Laura Sofia Pesquera Colon, DMD23, and Jordan Middleton, DMD23, both Office of Diversity and Inclusion Fellows, were chosen to represent HSDM at the 2021 ADEA Student Diversity Leadership Program related to their active commitment to promoting diversity, inclusion, and equity at HSDM.

Nicholas DeMeo, DMD21, was named the HSDM recipient of the American College of Dentists Outstanding Senior Dental Student Award, which recognizes a student’s achievements in academics, leadership, and initiative.

Desiree Hsiou, MMSc21, a resident in Orthodontics, received the 2020 Northeastern Society of Orthodontics Resident Research Award.

David Kornmehl, DMD21, and Natalie Wen, DMD22, were selected as recipients of the 2021 ADEA/GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare Preventive Dentistry Scholarship. Each year, the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) and GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare recognize predoctoral dental students who have demonstrated academic excellence in preventive dentistry.

Temitope (Aisha) Oshilaja, DMD24, won the Clifton O. Dummett Sr. Essay Competition on Diversity in Dentistry & Dental Education. The winning essayists were announced on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 2021.
Richard Shen, DMD22, was named a recipient of the Matthew Boylan Scholarship, which is presented by the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) at the Yankee Dental Congress 2021 ASDA District 1 Student Debate. This scholarship award was established in memory of former MDS executive director Matthew Boylan and is awarded to a Massachusetts resident and dental student who has provided distinguished service to organized dentistry and the community.

Shelly Dionne Taylor, MPH21, a current Joseph Henry Fellow, was named as a recipient of the “40 Under 40 Leaders in Minority Health” Award by the National Minority Quality Forum. She was selected as one of 40 minority health leaders under the age of 40 who have been leading the charge to better patient outcomes and build sustainable healthy communities.

Faculty News

Steffany Chamut, instructor in Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology, was awarded the 2021 American Society on Aging Leadership Institute scholarship supported by the American Society on Aging and CVS Health. The program is designed to prepare the next generation of leaders in the field of aging, focusing on understanding and embracing cultural differences in a way that respects aging adults.

Sara Hoge, DMD17, PD17, MMSc20; Ali Nasseh, MMSc97, PD97; and Elizabeth Perry, DMD93; have joined HSDM as part-time faculty in the Advanced Graduate Education program in Endodontics.

Kentaro Ikeda was appointed as an instructor in Oral Medicine, Infection and Immunity and associate surgeon in the Division of Oral Medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

Negin Katebi, DMSc16, received the Biomedical Research Award from the American Association of Orthodontists. Orthodontics residents Sunnie Kuna, MMSc22, and Benjamin Smith, MMSc22, are collaborators on the clinical trial which is a key part of Katebi’s research. Their research aims to improve individualization and optimization of clear aligner therapy through the use of new technologies in orthodontics.

Lydia Rae Legg was appointed as an instructor in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at HSDM. Legg is a reconstructive maxillofacial prosthodontist and dental oncologist. She specializes in craniofacial reconstructive surgery and prosthetics, whether acquired as a result of cancer surgery or trauma, or from alterations in growth and development or congenitally. She also has a focus on additive manufacturing in maxillofacial prosthetics, implant surgery, and clinical research.

Mohamed Masoud, DMSc07, stepped down from his full-time role as program director for the Orthodontics program. He has been appointed to associate professor, part-time, devoting two days per week to clinical and didactic teaching and mentoring residents. Negin Katebi, DMSc16, is serving as interim program director for Orthodontics.

Shigemi Nagai, associate professor of Oral Medicine, Infection and Immunity, and director of clinical research at HSDM, was awarded a National Academy of Medicine (NAM) Catalyst Award as part of the Healthy Longevity Global Competition, a multiyear, multimillion-dollar international competition seeking breakthrough innovations to extend human health and function later in life. Nagai is the only dentist to receive the award among the 150 awards issued in the inaugural round of the competition.

Hiroe Ohyama, MMSc96, DMD03, assistant professor of Restorative Dentistry and Biomaterials Sciences, was chosen as the recipient of the 2021 ADEA/Colgate-Palmolive Co. Excellence in Teaching Award for demonstrating exemplary standards and promoting excellence in dental education through scholarship and innovation.
Young Woo Song has joined HSDM as an osteology scholar from Seoul, South Korea. He is a clinical and research assistant professor at Yonsei University College of Dentistry. HSDM’s Division of Periodontology was chosen for the third time as one of the Osteology Scholarship Host Centers. Song will work under the guidance of Drs. David M. Kim, Masa Nagai, and Shigemi Nagai for one year.

Piamkamon Vacharotayangul was appointed as program director for HSDM’s Oral Medicine Advanced Graduate Education Program. She is an instructor in Oral Medicine, Infection and Immunity and associate surgeon in the Division of Oral Medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. Her clinical and research interests include improving the oral and general health in people living with HIV, as well as those with chronic oral lesions and oral morbidities after head and neck cancer treatments.

HSDM News

Jane Barrow, SM87, and Christina Cassano will represent HSDM in the Harvard Health Innovation Network, a group that promotes health care innovation and entrepreneurship across the Harvard ecosystem by connecting people to create partnerships and collaborations; communicating events, resources and funding opportunities; and by cultivating ideas in an inclusive community.

Kate Ellis Rezendes joined HSDM as chief of staff in the Dean’s Office. In this new role Rezendes works closely with HSDM’s leadership team and the dean to oversee the daily and long-term activities of the office and partner across the organization with faculty, staff, and administration, to advance the School’s mission and strategic priorities. Rezendes previously served in higher education senior staff roles, most recently working alongside leadership at Brown University’s School of Public Health.

The Department of Dentistry and Oral Health for the Cambridge Health Alliance was awarded $4.5 million to expand the Department. This is expected to allow a greater number of HSDM externships at the site for fourth year DMD students and more multidisciplinary opportunities. It will also increase the number of CHA/HSDM General Practice Residents.

Honoring HSDM’s Retirees

At the end of 2020, 12 dedicated members of HSDM’s staff retired. When combined, the 12 individuals provided more than 300 years of service to the HSDM community. Congratulations to Julian Bergschneider, Zena Brown, Barbara Caffelle, Antonia Faioe, Paula Gowen, Michael Harrington, Lisa Lavargna, Wanda Mock, Eileen Regan, Elvie Renaud, Ana Rivera, and William Walker.

“These employees have served distinctively and have been dedicated stewards of the School’s mission for years. We will all miss our colleagues, and wish them well as they embark on the next chapter of their life,” said Dean William Giannobile.
Upcoming Events

Thursday, May 27, 2021
Commencement and Class Day

To ensure the health and safety of the Harvard community, Harvard University and Harvard School of Dental Medicine will hold virtual graduation ceremonies on Thursday, May 27. The University-wide Commencement celebration will take place in the morning, followed by virtual Class Day exercises for Harvard School of Dental Medicine and Harvard Medical School in the afternoon.

Friday, June 4
Alumni Day Symposium

All alumni are welcome to join us for this year’s Alumni Day Symposium, titled, “New Directions in Dental Research,” which will feature speaker Rena N. D’Souza, DDS, MS, PhD, director of the NIH’s National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, and moderator Christopher H. Fox, DMD87, SM87, DMSc91, PD91, chief executive officer for the International Association for Dental Research.

Friday, June 4
HSDM State of the School Address

Hear updates from Dean William Giannobile, DMSc96, PD96 on research, education, and patient care at HSDM.

Tuesday, July 20
Leadership Forum 2021

HSDM’s Initiative to Integrate Oral Health and Medicine will host a virtual Leadership Forum, titled, “Data Driven Innovations and Integration: The Case for Oral Health,” featuring speakers from CVS Health, Walmart, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, and more.

See a full list of events at: hsdm.harvard.edu/calendar
Congratulations to the Class of 2021!

The Class of 2021 graduates in May. Here’s a look back at their first day in the clinic in 2019. How far they’ve come!