



## School of Dentistry

# JULY 2025

This newsletter is published by the LSU Health School of Dentistry's Office of Alumni Affairs. If you have an event or article you'd like published, please email [ds-alumni@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:ds-alumni@lsuhsc.edu) for more information.

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DDS Class of 2029

# *A Note from the Dean*

While summer may bring a slower pace to New Orleans, things are moving full speed ahead at the LSU School of Dentistry.

We began July by welcoming the DDS Class of 2029, and in just a few short weeks, all of our students will be back on campus as we dive into a new academic year. Even as the temperatures rise, so does our momentum and our commitment to our community.

This summer marks several exciting milestones:

- We welcomed the inaugural cohort of our new Advanced Education Program in Orofacial Pain,
- Officially opened our Special Care Clinic,
- And continued our tradition of service with students supporting a wide range of community programs.

We've begun work on a new five-year strategic plan that will guide LSUSD through 2030. This effort will ensure our mission, vision, and values continue to reflect the dedication and excellence of our students, faculty, and staff.

Campus improvements are also underway. Thanks to support from the LSU Health New Orleans' Chancellor, Steve Nelson, and the Louisiana Legislature, along with alumni and donors, we're making much-needed capital upgrades to enhance our clinical and educational spaces. I look forward to sharing more as these exciting developments progress.

As I wrap up my first year as Dean, I'm proud of all we've accomplished and grateful to lead a school filled with such talent, heart, and purpose. I hope to see many of you back on campus for Alumni Day on September 26.

Until then, thank you for being part of the LSUSD family.



John R. Gallo, III, DDS, MS  
Dean, LSU School of Dentistry

# Recent Graduate Panel Provides Faculty with Valuable Curricular Insight



(L-R): Dr. Jorge Rodriguez, Dr. Lauren Langlois, Dr. Alli Beth Blanchard & Dr. Conner Allison

On Friday, June 13, the LSU Health New Orleans School of Dentistry Curriculum Committee hosted its Recent Graduate Panel, an initiative designed to gather alumni feedback on the school's curriculum. While this year's discussion placed a particular focus on the Program in Dentistry, the panelists were poised to address questions about their professional experiences with other members of the oral health team.

Seven alumni from a range of graduation years and specialties returned—virtually and in person—to share their candid perspectives on how well their education prepared them for the realities of dental practice and postdoctoral training. Panelists included:

- **Dr. Conner Allison** ('23, DDS), a general dentist practicing in Mandeville, LA
- **Dr. Alli Beth Blanchard** ('20, DDS; '22, Orthodontics & Master of Science in Dentistry), a board-certified orthodontist and owner of Blanchard Orthodontics in Covington, LA
- **Dr. Aaron Connell** ('23, DDS; '25 GPR), a general dentist who will be practicing in southern New Jersey
- **Dr. Jeffrey Kerst** ('19, DDS), a general dentist and co-owner of Kerst & Caskey Family Dentistry in Shreveport, LA
- **Dr. Nadia Khan** ('23, DDS; '25 Pediatric Dentistry & Master of Science in Oral Sciences), a pediatric dentist practicing in Dallas, TX
- **Dr. Lauren Langlois** ('20, DDS; '23, Periodontics & Master of Science in Dentistry), a board-certified periodontist practicing throughout Louisiana
- **Dr. Jorge Rodriguez** ('20, DLT; '24, DDS), a general dentist practicing at Louisiana Dental Center in Kenner, LA

The panelists addressed a series of questions focused on curriculum strengths, gaps and recommendations for enhancing student readiness for practice and residency.

Topics included:

- Areas of the pre-doctoral curriculum that were most (and least) helpful in clinical practice
- Critical skills, including practice management, that alumni had to learn independently
- Exposure to business and practice operations, what is needed and where should it be taught in the curriculum for best impact
- Preparation for interprofessional and team-based care environments
- Readiness for specialty training and suggestions for improvement

Each panelist offered a unique lens shaped by their pathway into general practice, specialty training, or academic advancement. A common theme that emerged was the desire for more robust education in practice management and real-world clinical decision-making. Several also emphasized the importance of mentorship, communication, and collaborative care training as essential tools for today's dental professionals.

By providing actionable feedback, alumni continue to play a key role in shaping future curricular developments at LSUSD through Recent Graduate Panels and the Alumni Survey—ensuring that programs not only meet academic standards but also align with the practical needs of graduates entering an evolving healthcare landscape.

## Faculty Promotions Announced

The LSU School of Dentistry is proud to recognize the recent promotions of several faculty members whose contributions to education, research, and clinical service continue to elevate our institution.

### Part-Time Faculty

*Promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor:*

- Dr. Michael Shannon, Prosthodontics

### Full-Time, Non-Tenure Track Faculty

*Promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor:*

- Dr. Shirin Khoynezhad, Prosthodontics
- Dr. Albert "Fred" McMullen, Endodontics
- Dr. Jorge Palavicini, Prosthodontics

### Tenured Faculty

*Promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor with Tenure:*

- Dr. Eswar Kandaswamy, Periodontics

Please join us in congratulating these faculty members on their well-earned promotions and thanking them for their dedication to the mission of LSUSD.



**Correction: In last month's edition, we listed an incorrect phone number for our new TMD & Orofacial Pain Clinic. To refer a patient, please use the updated number: 504-941-8900. We apologize for the oversight.**

# Celebrating Excellence in Specialty Training: LSUSD Advanced Education Certificate Ceremony

The LSU School of Dentistry proudly honored the 2025 graduates of its Advanced Education programs during a special Certificate Ceremony held on June 20. The event recognized specialists in Endodontics, General Practice, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics, Pediatric Dentistry, Periodontics, and Prosthodontics.

Family members, friends, faculty, and staff gathered to celebrate this milestone. Dr. Paul Armbruster, Director of Advanced Education, and Dean John Gallo opened the ceremony with words of congratulations and encouragement for the graduating residents.

Dr. Albert “Fred” McMullen introduced keynote speaker Dr. Denis “Chip” Simon (DDS ’76), a Baton Rouge endodontist and proud LSUSD alumnus. Dr. Simon reflected on his career and shared heartfelt advice with the graduates, emphasizing the importance of always putting patients first—a guiding principle that, he noted, leads to a fulfilling and successful practice.

A highlight of the event was the presentation of research day awards. This year’s recipients were:

- **Dr. Robert D. Brannon Research Award (First Place):** Dr. Amber Kreko Scavicco - Periodontics
- **Second Place:** Dr. Hope Babin Grandy - Orthodontics
- **Third Place:** Dr. Carlos Eduardo Terres - Prosthodontics

The ceremony concluded with the formal awarding of certificates and a reception to celebrate the graduates’ accomplishments. Congratulations to the newest class of LSUSD-trained dental specialists!



Dr. Chip Simon addresses graduating residents, families, faculty, and staff.

## **Dr. Vinayak M. Joshi Selected for National Periodontics Leadership Program**

We're pleased to share that Dr. Vinayak M. Joshi, Associate Professor in the Department of Periodontics, has been selected to participate in the American Academy of Periodontology's 2025 Leadership, Engagement, Action, and Development (LEAD) Program.

The LEAD Program is a highly selective, two-day experience designed to identify and support future leaders in periodontics. Participants will explore topics such as leadership opportunities within organized dentistry, clinical and scientific innovation, practice management, community outreach, and the development of professional networks.

Dr. Joshi joined the LSU School of Dentistry faculty in 2022 and has quickly become a valued member of the academic and clinical community. We congratulate him on this honor and look forward to the contributions his leadership will bring to the field.



## **Dr. Adriana Wilson Named Chair of Prosthodontics**



Dr. Adriana Wilson (Pros '14) has been appointed Chair of the Department of Prosthodontics at the LSU School of Dentistry, effective May 1, 2025. She has served as Interim Chair since September 2024.

A native of Costa Rica, Dr. Wilson earned her D.D.S. from Universidad Latina de Costa Rica in 2008 and practiced general dentistry before moving to the United States. She completed a Prosthodontic Preceptorship at UT Health San Antonio in 2010 and joined LSUSD's postgraduate prosthodontics program, graduating in 2014. The following year, she joined the LSUSD faculty and is currently Associate Professor of Clinical Prosthodontics. She also previously served as Director of the Internationally Educated Dentist (IED) Program.

Throughout her tenure, Dr. Wilson has earned multiple accolades, including the Golden Apple Excellence in Teaching Award, the Research Excellence Award (2017), and the ADEA/AAL Faculty of Color Tuition Scholarship (2018). She is also a Fellow of the American Dental Education Association Leadership Institute and actively contributes to the profession through her service on the American College of Prosthodontists' Predoctoral Education Committee.

Dr. Wilson's dedication to education, research, and leadership continues to make a lasting impact at LSUSD and in the field of prosthodontics.

# Alumni Day 2025

**LSU Health**  
NEW ORLEANS  
School of Dentistry



## Responsible Dentistry: Advanced Materials and Techniques for the Modern Dental Team

**Friday,  
September 26,  
2025**

### Course Overview

This course is designed for dentists and dental team members seeking to deepen their understanding of both direct and indirect restorative materials in contemporary practice. With rapid advancements in dental materials, treatment planning has evolved to prioritize the conservation of tooth structure and long-term outcomes. Participants will explore how these innovations impact clinical decisions—from diagnosis and material selection to preparation, delivery, and follow-up care. Emphasizing the importance of collaboration, this course highlights the essential role of the entire dental team in ensuring seamless, patient-centered care. Through case discussions and practical strategies, attendees will gain insights into how to optimize workflows and outcomes in a modern restorative setting.

#### Learning Objectives

- Identify recent advancements in direct and indirect restorative materials and their clinical uses.
- Evaluate the impact of new materials on treatment planning.
- Define each dental team member's role in the restorative workflow.
- Apply evidence-based material selection to optimize function and esthetics.

### Post Event Alumni Reception

Join us for a special evening to reconnect and celebrate! Following the day's events, the Alumni Day Evening Reception offers the opportunity to mingle with fellow alumni, faculty, and friends. Enjoy light refreshments, drinks, and great conversation as we honor our shared history at the place where it all started.

LSU School of Dentistry  
1100 Florida Ave  
New Orleans, LA

Sign-in & Breakfast: 7:00am-8:00am  
Course: 8:00am - 4:00pm  
Alumni Reception: 4:00pm-6:00pm

**Dr. Troy Schmedding**

Dr. Troy Schmedding is a 1993 honors graduate of the Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry in San Francisco, California. Troy maintains a private practice in Walnut Creek, CA focusing on aesthetic and functional dentistry. Dr. Schmedding was a Course Director at the University of the Pacific and has published numerous articles on the topics of restorative materials and protocol driven Dentistry. An Accredited member of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, he lectures both nationally and internationally on Aesthetic, Restorative and Adhesive Dentistry. Dr. Schmedding shares his knowledge with numerous dental manufacturers helping to stimulate new product development for our profession.

### Register Now!

Dentist / Hygienist, Lab Tech / Assistant, Other

<b>Early Bird</b>	<b>Regular</b>	<b>Late</b>
until 8/15	8/16-9/15	After 9/15
<b>\$310</b>	<b>\$325</b>	<b>\$375</b>
<b>\$185</b>	<b>\$200</b>	<b>\$250</b>
<b>\$110</b>	<b>\$125</b>	<b>\$175</b>

Registration includes a maximum of 5 C.E. Clinical credits (lecture), continental breakfast, box lunch and post event celebration.



**Questions**  
LSU CDE (504) 941-8193;  
CDE@lsuhsc.edu



**ADA**  
C.E.R.P.  
Continuing Education  
Recognition Program

LSU Health New Orleans Continuing Dental Education is an ADA CERP Recognized Provider. ADA CERP is a service of the American Dental Association to assist dental professionals in identifying quality providers of continuing dental education. ADA CERP does not approve or endorse individual courses or instructors, nor does it imply acceptance of credit hours by boards of dentistry. Concerns or complaints about a CE provider may be directed to the provider or to the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition at [www.ada.org/CERP](http://www.ada.org/CERP).

The registration fee is partially refundable (minus an administrative fee) if you cancel your registration thirty (30) days before the start of the course. Any cancellation after this deadline will result in forfeiture of the entire tuition. Written cancellation requests can be submitted by email to [CDE@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:CDE@lsuhsc.edu). LSU Health New Orleans Continuing Dental Education (LSU CDE) reserves the right to cancel the course should circumstances warrant such action. Full refunds of registration fees would be made in that event. However, LSU CDE is not responsible for any related costs or expenses, including cancellation/change charges assessed by airlines.



## Report from the 2025 Regular Session of the Legislature: LDA Successful in STOPPING Fluoride Ban



Annette Drodgy  
Executive Director  
Louisiana Dental Association

The 2025 regular session of the Louisiana Legislature adjourned sine die on Thursday, June 12. In the final days, lawmakers passed important policies, finalized a \$51 billion budget, and set the stage for future work.

Here are a few bills of interest:

**SB 2** as originally filed by Senator Mike Fesi was the bill that would prohibit any public water system from adding fluoride to the water. It was amended in the Senate Health and Welfare Committee to require voters to sign a petition to call for an election to vote on fluoridation. The amendment still ultimately would ban fluoride as it would make it very onerous and expensive to call for a vote and get the funds to put equipment back into the water systems that had previously had community water fluoridation.

In a 10-5 vote on May 28 in House Health and Welfare, the bill was voted down. However, in a last-minute effort to ban fluoride, Senator Fesi tried to have the fluoride ban amended onto two other bills. One of the bills was ruled "not germane." The second bill, HB 690 by Rep. Chuck Owens, went to conference committee. The LDA sent out grassroots alerts again and Rep. Owens chose not to amend his bill to add the fluoride ban.

How were we successful in voting down the fluoride ban? It is simple: grassroots advocacy. We put our contact dentist system into place many years ago and it still works. Dentists from all over the state worked together to educate their legislators on the benefits of community water fluoridation. A coalition of interested groups was organized with CareQuest, and we met often and communicated frequently regarding testimony.

Hundreds of emails were sent and phone calls made. Dentists and the broader scientific community support community water fluoridation as one of the top public health measures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

So, what's next? Unfortunately, the fight for community water fluoridation is probably not over, but you can do two things to help: 1) let the LDA know if you have met or know any of the legislators. Again, we want to continue building that contact dentist system; and 2) educate your legislators. If you know, or see, any of the legislators at events and meetings, talk to them about fluoride.



Let them know the long-term effects of removing fluoride from our water, because typically those that have the least are those that have the most to lose – 55% of the children who qualify for dental Medicaid do NOT see a dentist. They needed us to speak up for them and we did!

**HB 340** by Rep. Candace Newell was the LDA's bill that would allow the Louisiana State Board of Dentistry to move its headquarters to Orleans Parish. The bill passed, but unfortunately the Governor vetoed this bill.

**HB 543** by Rep. Wayne McMahan was the LDA's bill that would allow Louisiana to join the American Association of Dental Board's (AADB) compact for dentists and hygienists. The bill passed and was signed by the Governor.

In conjunction with Dr. Don Donaldson, the Medicaid Task Force, and DAP-PAC, over \$12 million in state and federal match funds were secured once again for Louisiana's Dental Incentive Payment Program (DIPP). Practices will continue to earn incentive payments based on their performance on quality measures. The program is designed to foster a greater effort by the owner and the front desk staff to aggressively pursue the continued return of your patients for timely recall.

Throughout session, the lobbying team monitored approximately 30 bills impacting dentistry, as well as others as they were amended and changed. **It is more important than ever to let the LDA know if you are a friend, relative, or dentist of an elected official.**

## Upcoming LDA/ADA Events

[Kick-Off C.E. | August 22, 2025](#)

[Pediatric Sedation Renewal Course | September 12, 2025](#)

[Sip & C.E. in Napa Valley | September 17-19, 2025](#)

[Last Chance Seminar | December 12, 2025](#)

[Winter C.E. in Big Sky, MT | February 15-17, 2026](#)

[NODC/LDAAS | April 9-11, 2026](#)

[Summer Education Conference | June 17-20, 2026](#)

[Winter C.E. at Walt Disney World | February 7-9, 2027](#)

[NODC/LDAAS | April 8-10, 2027](#)

[Winter C.E. at Walt Disney World | February 27-29, 2028](#)

For more information or to register, please visit [ladental.org/events](http://ladental.org/events)