

LSU Health

NEW ORLEANS

School of Dentistry

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MARCH 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 for more information.

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ASDA Annual Session 2025

The American Student Dental Association (ASDA) Annual Session 2025 brought together dental students from across the country early this March. Lasting two full days, the session theme, *Where Your Voice is Instrumental*, set the tone for LSUSD ASDA leaders to network with peers, vote on the business of the association, and receive chapter training to enhance leadership skills.

The American Student Dental Association is a national student-run organization that protects and advances the rights, interests, and welfare of dental students. It represents students with a unified voice and provides information, education, advocacy, and services. In attendance at the ASDA Annual Session was LSUSD ASDA leadership, Katherine Burkett (D4), Annikah Guenther (D2), Joanne Kim (D2), Justin Nguyen (D3), Rivers Singley (D1), and Megan Davis (D3).

The 2025 session kicked off with keynote speaker, Dr. Moogega Cooper, an American astronomer who shared five valuable lessons about innovation and teamwork with attendees. The day continued with the House of Delegates Business Meeting and Reference Committee Hearings where delegates presented amendments to the floor; LSUSD ASDA leaders actively participated in voicing their opinions at the microphone, determining the future of various amendments. Networking opportunities were abundant as attendees visited the Dental Marketplace where over 30 industries and sponsors showcased new tools, business services, and opportunities within the dental field. “I personally gained valuable contacts from these representatives to bring back to our LSU chapter”, shared Joanne Kim, LSUSD ASDA Secretary elect. The day then concluded with the Joint District Caucus, where delegates met to assess the election process for future leaders, and the Gold Crown Awards, where ASDA chapters were recognized for their dedication and efforts in supporting the organization’s mission.

On day two, LSUSD ASDA leaders voted on amendments during the House of Delegates Business Meeting and then participated in the Individual District Caucus. At the Caucus, ASDA leaders met with the newly redistricted schools in the 10th district and voted on trustee positions. The busy day ended with a Gala to celebrate the new national leaders!

“Our LSU chapter proudly represented at Annual Session 2025. We are so grateful to be a part of the largest and most influential student-run organization in the country!” Joanne Kim enthusiastically shared. “From voting on amendments to electing new leaders and networking to grow our local chapter, it was an experience to remember.”



L-R: Annikah Guenther, Katherine Burkett, Megan Davis, Joanne Kim, Rivers Singley, Justin Nguyen



LSUSD Represents at STEM Fest

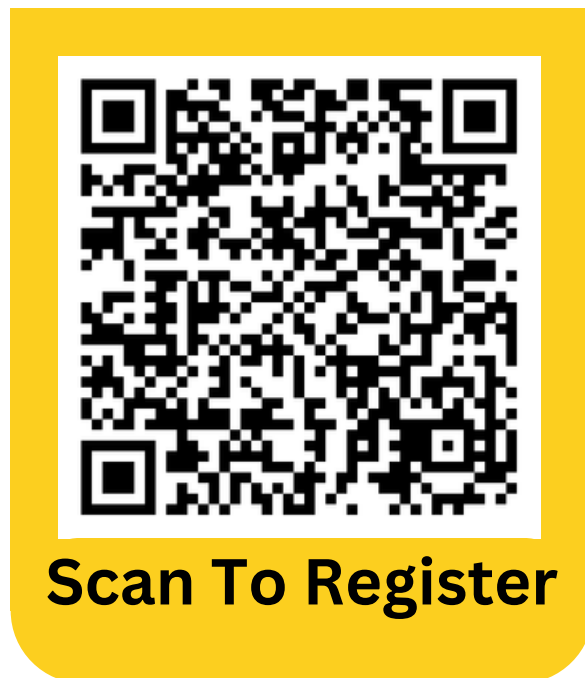
On March 15, over 3,000 attendees explored technology, science, math, and engineering at STEM Fest at the Caesar's Superdome in New Orleans, sponsored by the Saints, Pelicans, and Chevron. The event featured hands-on activities for K-12 students to discover STEM and career paths. LSU Health's Schools of Dentistry, Medicine, and Nursing engaged participants in healthcare science, with Dentistry distributing oral hygiene supplies donated by Henry Schein Cares.

Dr. Nicholas Mosca, Associate Professor of Clinical Diagnostic Sciences, was joined by members of the Dental Hygiene faculty including Ashley Millon, Assistant Clinical Professor, Shannon McCann, Clinical Instructor, Catrina Lanza, Clinical Instructor, and Claudia Rivera, Associate Clinical Professor.

Young children eagerly learned about oral hygiene and practiced brushing and flossing with LSU. The team hopes to return next year with advanced technology for older students, including 3D digital imaging for prosthesis fabrication.

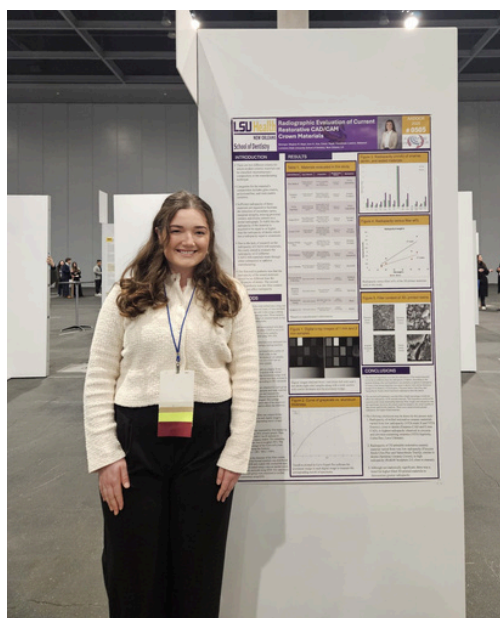


Register for the LSUSD ASDA Miles for Smiles 5K Run/Walk



Student Spotlight

Meghan Belanger and Tammy San Present at the AAODCR Annual Meeting



Meghan Belanger (D2)

“This past week, I had the honor of representing LSUSD at the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (AAODCR) Annual Meeting & Exhibition in New York City. There, I was able to present the research I have completed over the past year with my research mentor, Dr. Amir Nejat, Assistant Professor of Clinical Prosthodontics. My research involved analyzing the radiopacities of 12 new CAD/CAM materials to ensure that they have radiopacities that are compliant with ISO standards. Dental materials are required to have a radiopacity equivalent to or higher than dentin to allow for the detection of secondary caries, marginal integrity, missing proximal contact, and excess cement on a dental radiograph. Our research shows that four materials had radiopacities that were much lower than dentin which proves the necessity for these new materials to be further researched. We also measured the filler weight percentages of the 3-D printed materials we examined. Although not statistically significant, there was a trend for higher-filled 3D-printed materials to demonstrate greater radiopacity. Presenting this research at the AAODCR Annual Meeting allowed me to converse with fellow dental students, dental material brands, and esteemed faculty from other dental schools who gave me invaluable feedback to help better my future research endeavors. I am so thankful to both LSUSD and my research mentor, Dr. Nejat, for all the help in making this possible for me!”

-Meghan Belanger (D2)

Student Spotlight

Meghan Belanger and Tammy San Present at the AAODCR Annual Meeting



Tammy San (D2)

“As a proud student at the LSU School of Dentistry, I consistently seek opportunities to represent my school. In early March, I participated in the Student Competition for Advancing Dental Research and its Application (SCADA) program and presented at the Annual AAODCR Conference in New York City. I had the pleasure of presenting a poster on my research during my time in Dr. Zezhang Wen's microbiology lab. Under the mentorship of Dr. Wen and Dr. Bo Yang, I investigated *Rothia mucilaginosa*, an oral bacterium from one of the four most predominant genera of bacteria in the oral cavity, and examined how biofilm formation is influenced when grown in a community with other major oral microorganisms. Understanding the intra- and inter-species interactions among oral microbes is crucial, especially since plaque development and stability can lead to the aggressive onset of rampant carious lesions. From my research, I discovered that when *R. mucilaginosa* was grown in a dual-species model with *Candida albicans*, biofilm formation was significantly enhanced. However, when *R. mucilaginosa* was grown with other major oral bacteria, changes in biofilm formation were minimal, or biofilm formation was significantly reduced in the case of *Actinomyces naeslundii*. These results suggest that *R. mucilaginosa* interactions in the plaque microbiota are species-specific, which indicates significant roles of *R. mucilaginosa* in plaque development and stability and, ultimately, oral health.

Attending the Annual AAODCR was an enriching experience as I met and connected with eager dental students from around the world, dedicated researchers, and revered professors, all of whom were encouraging and sharing suggestions on how I can continue my investigation. My pursuit of research would not have been possible without the support of LSUSD, Dr. Wen, Professor of Microbiology, Department of Oral and Craniofacial Biology, and Dr. Yang, Postdoctoral Researcher in Oral & Craniofacial Biology, for which I am deeply grateful.”

-Tammy San (D2)

Join us! LSUSD Alumni Reception at NODC



Scan here

Last chance to RSVP!

You're Invited!

Join us for an Alumni Reception on **April 10th from 5-7 PM at Bourbon House**. Unwind after the conference, reconnect with fellow alumni, and enjoy delicious food and drinks. We look forward to seeing you there!



The New Orleans Dental Conference and LDA Annual Session is Almost Here!



Annette B. Droddy
Executive Director,
Louisiana Dental Association

NODA member Dr. Jimmy Burns is the 2025 New Orleans Dental Conference and LDA Annual Session chair, and I would like to share his thoughts related to the upcoming meeting April 10-11, 2025. This year's meeting is smaller than normal since the ADA was in New Orleans in October, so make sure to register right away and reserve your spot! Dr. Burns is offering free attendance to dental students, but you do have to let him know that you are attending. If you are an LSUSD student and want to attend, reach out to him right away at jburn8@lsuhsc.edu.



Conference Chairman Dr. Jimmy Burns:

With Spring here, there's one important thing to do: register for the New Orleans Dental Conference and LDA Annual Session 2025. This conference will be the highlight of your year. As I've mentioned before, this year's conference will take place on the same weekend as the French Quarter Fest, an event with great music, food, entertainment, and shopping opportunities. The combination of these events will get you on your feet dancing and yelling "Laissez les bons temps rouler!"

Seriously, my conference board and I are extremely proud of the conference we have put together for our constituents on the heels of Smilecon®. We will offer warm hospitality, knowledgeable speakers, and good, old-fashioned NOLA fun. Come pass a good time with us and get a little dental education in the process.

The New Orleans Dental Conference/ Louisiana Dental association Annual Session will be April 10-11 at the Astor Crowne Plaza in the heart of the French Quarter.

Visit NODC.org to register or for additional information.