

**LSU Health**  
NEW ORLEANS

School of Dentistry

ALUMNI & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

# Newsletter



**WINTER 2026**

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### Contact Us

This newsletter is published by the LSU Health New Orleans School of Dentistry's Office of Alumni & Community 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.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

As we step into 2026 at the School of Dentistry, I hope this new year brings a sense of renewal and optimism to each of you. The start of a year always gives us a moment to pause, reflect, and look ahead—and I'm proud of the strong momentum we're carrying forward as a community.



*Dr. John Gallo*

One of the most exciting developments on the horizon is the launch of our large-scale facility renovations. Beginning in late spring, we will start with a full renovation of Auditorium C, the first step in a broader effort to modernize key learning and teaching spaces across our campus. These improvements will strengthen the daily experience for our students and faculty and support the continued excellence of our academic programs. We know construction brings temporary inconveniences, and we truly appreciate your patience as we make these long-term investments in our School's future.

We are also continuing to deepen and expand our efforts around alumni engagement in 2026. Our graduates are an essential part of the LSUSD family, and we're focused on creating more opportunities to connect, collaborate, and celebrate their achievements. Whether through events, continuing education, or new ideas to come, we want our alumni to feel the same sense of belonging and pride that they experienced as students.

Thank you for your continued support, commitment, and partnership. I'm grateful for everything you contribute to our school, and I look forward to the progress and shared successes that 2026 will bring.

*John R. Gallo, III, DDS, MS*

**John R. Gallo III, DDS, MS**

*Dean, LSU Health New Orleans School of Dentistry*

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: Dental Hygiene

### Leadership Transition Announced

#### Farewell to Jane Walsh

LSUSD extends heartfelt gratitude to **Jane Walsh, RDH, JD, former Program Director and Associate Professor of Clinical Comprehensive Dentistry**, who left LSUSD to begin a position closer to her family. Walsh began working at LSUSD in 2016. Over the past decade, her leadership and dedication made a lasting impact on the Program in Dental Hygiene (DH), and she departs with the warmest wishes from colleagues and students.

#### Barker Named Interim Program Director

Stepping in as **Interim Program Director is Tricia Barker, RDH, MEd, Associate Professor of Clinical Comprehensive Dentistry**.

Since joining LSUSD in 2007, Barker brings extensive experience, a strong student-centered philosophy, and a deep commitment to advancing the program. She received a BS in Dental Hygiene from LSUSD in 2000 and an MEd in Human Performance and Health Promotion from the University of New Orleans, and has earned numerous awards recognizing her excellence in clinical practice, teaching, and service.



*Tricia Barker*

### Academic Achievement Highlight

LSUSD proudly recognizes **Diedra L. Brewer-Hohensee, PhD, RDH, CHES, CTTS, Associate Professor of Clinical Comprehensive Dentistry**, who completed a **PhD in Health Administration and Education** from William Carey University in August 2025. Her dissertation explored faculty perceptions of the Admission Test for Dental Hygiene (ATDH) as a predictor of student success in associate and baccalaureate dental hygiene programs, contributing valuable insight to dental hygiene education and admissions.

### SADHA Thanksgiving Canned Goods Drive

LSUSD's Student Chapter of the **American Dental Hygienists' Association (SADHA)** recently celebrated a season of service, scholarship, and professional growth. The 2025 **Thanksgiving Canned Goods Drive** brought friendly competition to both campuses. In New Orleans, the DH1 and DH2 classes went head to head to see which group could donate the most canned goods for families in need. After an enthusiastic effort from both classes, DH2 earned the victory and a well-deserved cookie cake celebration.

Meanwhile, in Alexandria, students competed against the other allied health programs on campus, once again demonstrating outstanding commitment to community support. Dental Hygiene came out on top there as well, earning a cookie cake party and showcasing the generosity and teamwork that define LSUSD's student community.

### Faculty Article Published

The department also celebrates recent scholarly activity by faculty members **Ashley Millon, RDH, MSHCM, Assistant Professor of Clinical Comprehensive Dentistry**, and **Kellie Bourgeois, RDH, BSDH, MEd, Assistant Professor of Clinical Comprehensive Dentistry**.

Their **article**, published in **Community Dental Health**, highlights a **service-learning initiative** developed in response to a critical need for early childhood dental care in a South Louisiana parish.

The initiative provided fluoride varnish application, oral screenings, oral health education, nutritional counseling, and parental engagement for 170 children ages three to six. Focused on creating sustainable community-university partnerships, the initiative aimed to expand access to care, enhance oral health literacy, and give healthcare students meaningful experiential learning opportunities.

# Adopt an Angel Program Delivers Another Successful Year of Giving

The LSU Health New Orleans School of Dentistry proudly celebrated its 11<sup>th</sup> year supporting the Salvation Army’s Adopt an Angel program, providing gifts to 100 families in need. The Philanthropy Committee of LSUSD’s chapter of the American Student Dental Association (ASDA) led this important tradition once again in December 2025.

For more than a decade, LSUSD has partnered with the Salvation Army to provide gifts to those in need during the holiday season. The Salvation Army provides “angel tags” representing individuals, children, and families along with a list of requested

items, including new clothes, shoes, personal care products, and toys. Generous donors select tags, purchase gifts, and deliver them to the LSUSD’s Office of the Dean. Student volunteers then assist Salvation Army representatives with loading trucks for gift delivery.

Special thanks to all participating donors and the LSUSD ASDA Philanthropy Committee—Olivia Black (D3), Kayla Bougere (D3), Mia Dallimore (D1), Emily Eberts (D3), Margaret Hovan (D2), and Drue McGinn (D1)—for making the holidays brighter for many local families.



## 5,000+ Biopsies Diagnosed in 2025

On December 8, 2025, the LSU Oral Pathology Biopsy Service celebrated a new record of diagnosing 5,000 biopsy specimens in one year, marking a major achievement in providing quality patient care and an important diagnostic service to the community. The total number of cases processed for the year was 5,281. The entire pathology team is grateful to

all the clinicians who entrust their patients’ diagnoses to Drs. Kitrina Cordell and Molly Rosebush, both full-time faculty and board-certified oral and maxillofacial pathologists.



*Drs. Molly Rosebush (left) and Kitrina Cordell*

## DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

## Comprehensive Dentistry

### Digital Dentistry Prepares Dentists for the Future

LSUSD continues to advance instruction in digital dentistry, integrating modern tools and techniques into the curriculum to prepare students for today's evolving clinical environment. From early exposure to digital workflows to hands-on experience with current technologies, students are learning how innovation enhances precision, efficiency, and patient comfort.



*Dr. Peter Dupree demonstrates digital scanning technology to create a 3D model for custom dental restorations.*

The School is also looking ahead to **building renovations and expanded instructional spaces** that will support the continued growth of digital dentistry. These improvements are designed to broaden training opportunities, strengthen technology integration, and ensure graduates are ready to meet the expectations of modern dental practice.

### Advancing Orofacial Pain Education

Recognized by the American Dental Association (ADA) as the 12<sup>th</sup> dental specialty, LSUSD's Advanced Education Program in Orofacial Pain launched last summer with its first two residents.



*Drs. Majdlija Aleksan (left) and Swathi Muteni, first-year residents in Orofacial Pain, demonstrate low-level laser therapy (LLLT) used to treat temporomandibular disorders (TMD).*

Two additional residents have been selected to begin July 2026. The program is seeking private practice collaborators to work with the residents. Those interested should contact **Dr. Rana Almudamgha** at [ralmud@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:ralmud@lsuhsc.edu) or 504-941-8900.

### Special Needs Clinic Aims to Expand Care

LSUSD's Special Care Clinic offers Friday appointments since its grand opening in May 2025, but is looking to expand days and hours to reduce wait times for patients and increase exposure for students. To get involved, contact **Dr. Frank Martello** at [fmarte@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:fmarte@lsuhsc.edu) or 504-941-8257.



*Dr. Frank Martello and Brooke Haydel (D4) shown in the Special Care Clinic.*

# Holiday Events at LSUSD: December 2025 Recap

December was full of festivity at the LSU Health New Orleans School of Dentistry as faculty, staff, residents, and students celebrated the season with activities and treats.



Thanks to all who participated!

## Find Hermey

The fun kicked off with daily campus-wide scavenger hunts to "Find Hermey," the beloved elf from Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. Participants followed social media clues to locate the hidden plush Hermey doll for candy prizes.



## Red Beans, Rice & Reindeer Gear

On December 8, everyone enjoyed a Monday New Orleans tradition—red beans and rice. Attendees wore reindeer-themed accessories.



## Beignets & Bells

December 9 featured fresh beignets from Café du Monde and holiday bells as the accessory theme.

## Raising Cane's & Ugly Sweaters

The spirit continued December 10 with a Raising Cane's lunch sponsored by the LSUSD Student Government Association, paired with the hilarity of ugly holiday sweaters as the attire theme.



## Hot Cocoa Bar & Flannel

The week concluded December 11 with a decadent hot cocoa bar with marshmallows, whipped cream, candy canes, and more. Some attendees showed up in their favorite flannel, adding a warm finale to the celebrations.



## ADVANCED EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS: Endodontics



LSUSD Endodontics residents representing the classes of 2026, 2027, and 2028 shown above from left are Drs. Ann Ma, Joon Koh, Masyn Cameron, Landon Boeneke, Rachel Healy, Tripp Savage, Maggie Wang, Katelyn Lee, Kyle Gaudet, Laura Tomaszewski, David Rainwater, and Max Baran.

### Faculty Coverage and Alumni Engagement

Increased faculty involvement in the endodontic clinic over the past couple of years has allowed stronger daily clinical supervision and dedicated time for departmental leadership and program administration. This balance supports both resident education and long-term program planning. Alumni involvement remains essential to maintaining this strength. Interested graduates may contact **Dr. Albert “Fred” McMullen, Department Head of Endodontics** at [amcmul@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:amcmul@lsuhsc.edu) or 504-941-8395.

### Nationally Recognized Research

Over the last three years, LSUSD Endodontics residents delivered 12 poster presentations at **American Association of Endodontists Annual Sessions** and published 11 articles, highlighting the program’s continued commitment to scholarship and evidence-based practice and reinforcing its reputation as a competitive residency program.

Residents also receive hands-on training with state-of-the-art systems such as the **Sonendo GentleWave®** and **Biolase laser technology**, exposing them to contemporary irrigation and cleaning techniques used in private practice.

### Growth in Clinical Experience

The department made strategic changes to expand patient care, such as a **private-practice-style referral system**, which has dramatically increased outside referrals and overall case volume. As a result, the program’s annual number of completed root canal therapies has nearly doubled, **from an average of 700 cases per year (2016–2020) to 1,400 cases per year (2021–2025)**. Recent graduating classes have averaged more than 300 completed endodontic cases per resident, significantly enhancing clinical readiness upon graduation.

### Save the Date—Certificate Ceremony

Join us in celebrating the Class of 2026 at the Advanced Education Certificate Awarding Ceremony on **June 19, 2026**.

## Planning a Class Reunion?

Let LSUSD Help Spread the Word



If you’re planning a reunion for your graduating class, let us know! LSUSD’s Office of Alumni & Community Affairs can help boost awareness of your event through our social media and emails. Send details including the program, class year, date(s), location, and contact person’s information to [ds-alumni@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:ds-alumni@lsuhsc.edu) and we can help your class reconnect!

# Survey Spotlight: What You Told Us

## Highlights from the 2025 Alumni & Community Engagement Survey

Thank you to the 132 alumni, faculty, staff, residents, and students who shared their insights in our recent engagement survey. Your feedback is helping shape the future of LSUSD's communications, programming, and alumni outreach. Here's what we heard—and what we're doing next.



### WHAT MATTERS MOST TO OUR ALUMNI

You told us loud and clear which content you value most in your communications:

- ▶ **Event Announcements** and **Alumni News** were the top ranked interests across all respondents.
- ▶ **Student Highlights** and **Research Updates** also received high enthusiasm.

You'll see more of these topics featured throughout upcoming issues.



### WHAT WE'RE IMPROVING

We heard several common suggestions, including:

#### ▶ **Newsletter Access**

Some alumni reported receiving only the "cover" of the newsletter. We've addressed this issue to ensure full access in every email version going forward.

#### ▶ **Event Locations**

Many of you asked for events outside New Orleans. We're working to expand our geographic reach for both social and CE events.

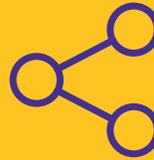


### HOW YOU PREFER TO HEAR FROM US

Email continues to dominate as the preferred communication method, and most respondents favor:

- ▶ **Quarterly updates** for the alumni newsletter
- ▶ **Monthly updates** for general school news

We're aligning our communication schedule to match these preferences.



### HOW CONNECTED OUR ALUMNI FEEL

More than half of respondents describe themselves as "somewhat connected" to LSUSD, and nearly one in five feel "very connected." We're committed to strengthening that connection through improved outreach, more regional opportunities, and expanded programming.



### WHAT YOU WANT MORE OF

You shared many valuable ideas, and several themes emerged:

#### ▶ **Continuing Education (CE)**

This was the **#1 most requested offering**. Alumni expressed strong interest in more CE options—including **in person, hands on, and regional** CE opportunities.

We're actively exploring ways to expand and diversify our CE programming.

#### ▶ **Class Reunions and Class Based Outreach**

Alumni want more ways to reconnect with their peers—especially:

- **5-year class reunions**
- **Class specific updates**
- **A stronger class representative network**

Stay tuned for more information on new initiatives to strengthen class level engagement.

#### ▶ **Visibility for Programs in Dental Hygiene and Dental Laboratory Technology**

A meaningful number of respondents asked for:

- More consistent **Dental Hygiene and Dental Laboratory Technology alumni highlights**
- Better representation of all LSUSD programs

We will be expanding the variety of alumni stories and program updates shared throughout the year.

Thank you for sharing your voice! Your feedback is already helping us fine-tune our priorities and strengthen our alumni community. We'll continue sharing updates as new initiatives roll out—and we look forward to seeing many of you at future events, on campus and around the region.

**PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:**

# Dental Laboratory Technology

## ■ Spring 2026 Admissions

Admissions for the Dental Laboratory Technology Program (DLT) are just around the corner. We encourage those interested in advancing their skills—or guiding a colleague toward a new career path—to take note.

Our program offers **comprehensive, hands-on training** in dental materials, digital workflows, fixed and removable prosthodontics, and the technical artistry that supports daily clinical practice.

It's an excellent opportunity for those already working in dental settings who want to expand their expertise or transition into a more specialized role within the laboratory side of the profession.

## ■ Application Deadline

The deadline to submit applications is **April 15**, so now is the time to share this information with potential applicants. Visit our **website** for program requirements, curriculum, and outcomes.

## ■ Contact Information

For questions, contact DLT Program Director Julio Zavala at [jzaval@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:jzaval@lsuhsc.edu) or **504-941-8085**.



*DLT Program Director and Associate Clinical Professor Julio Zavala (left) and Associate Clinical Professor Lenny Aucoin shown in the lab.*

## LSU Health Foundation Welcomes New Leaders

The LSU Health Foundation welcomed two new leaders in 2025.

Katie Acuff, Esq. joined as President and CEO in May with more than two decades of experience in healthcare philanthropy, higher education fundraising, and institutional advancement.

Acuff has led transformational campaigns and secured major gifts, shaping the trajectory of nationally recognized institutions. At Tulane, she built and led the Principal Gifts program, raising over \$1.8 billion and securing over \$100 million in philanthropic support, while fostering lasting relationships with some of the institution's most generous donors.

Rob Allen arrived in August as Vice President and Chief Advancement Officer, bringing a strong record

of leading high-performing teams and driving pivotal philanthropic initiatives.

He most recently served as Associate Vice President for Development at the University of Virginia, where he guided the \$6 billion Honor the Future campaign. He has held leadership roles in advancement at Tulane, Princeton, and Harvard Business School.

Allen will work with LSUSD Dean Gallo and School leaders to grow alumni engagement and philanthropy. LSUSD looks forward to partnering with the Foundation on key initiatives.

To learn about ways to support the School, contact the Foundation at **504-568-3712**.



# Leading with Purpose from the National Level to Improve Our State Lobby



*By Annette Droddy,  
Executive Director, LDA*

An important part of the Tripartite is our ability to protect dentistry from the federal, state, and local levels. Without organized dentistry, no one dentist or office could accomplish what we are able to do together.

Many of you may be interested in two initiatives that the ADA has been lobbying for from the national level that can help the states with their own insurance legislative priorities.

## **Virtual Credit Card Opt-In Provision**

The National Council of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL) voted to approve amendments to the 2020 Transparency in Dental Benefits Contracting Model Act, marking a key development for state dental societies that have advocated for changes to virtual credit card payment provisions. At NCOIL's Health Committee meeting, members adopted language that shifts virtual credit card-related payments from an "opt-out" to an "opt-in" system. Under the revised model, dental plans must obtain a dentist's permission before issuing any payment method that carries associated fees, such as a virtual credit card.

After NCOIL voted in the original model act several years ago, the LDA passed the bill in Louisiana. With the updated amendments to the model act, dentists opt in if they want to utilize the virtual credit card system. Many dentists prefer NOT to use the virtual credit card as they are charged additional fees on what are already reduced, contracted rates. Our LDA Council on Government Affairs, and now our Board of Directors, has voted to make this one of our 2026 legislative priorities.

## **WAIVER Act**

The ADA's lobbying team recently met with our own Sen. John Kennedy to discuss his support of the proposed WAIVER (Waiving Applicable Interference for Viable ERISA Reform) Act. We are currently seeking bill introduction in both the House and the Senate, and Sen. Kennedy's support will be critical.

The WAIVER Act provides a clear mechanism that states can utilize to properly regulate coverage for the benefit of their constituents. Nationally, 46% of people with dental coverage receive their benefits through self-funded plans, and too many of these plans invoke ERISA preemptions to avoid complying with state consumer protection laws.

IF PASSED, states would be allowed to apply for waivers of ERISA preemption for specific laws. We believe that our state would be empowered to enforce important patient protections, which would promote transparency, accountability, and quality care for all Louisiana citizens. Louisianians work hard and purchase insurance plans that they think will be regulated through state law, only to have the plan invoke ERISA preemptions avoiding quality, consumer-based laws that are there for their protection.

The Louisiana Insurance Code includes laws governing patient protection and provider fairness that set a standard which all Louisianians should benefit from. Our leaders are our members, and they lead with purpose. It is the strength of our three levels of membership that make the dental lobby a strong force to promote, advocate, and protect the dental profession.

## Alumni Achievements Featured on Our Social Media

Our alumni are doing amazing things, and we'd love to help celebrate you!

Whether you've earned a recent award, reached a professional milestone, completed a degree, launched a business, given back to your community, or experienced another exciting, newsworthy moment—we want to know.



Alumni are invited to submit a brief update along with a photo showcasing a recent accomplishment, accolade, or meaningful life event.

Selected submissions may be featured on LSUSD's social media platforms to inspire current students, fellow alumni, and the community.

Help us highlight the lasting impact of an LSUSD education and show the incredible paths our graduates take! Email your update and photo to [ds-alumni@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:ds-alumni@lsuhsc.edu).

## Where Are You Now?

Moved or changed your personal or business contact information? We'd love to stay in touch! Share your new information with LSUSD's Office of Alumni & Community Affairs—**update now!**

## New Quarterly Newsletter Schedule

Based on your survey feedback, we're introducing a new schedule for the Alumni & Community Affairs Newsletter to bring you even better content!

Look for winter, spring, summer, and fall issues in your email each year.

## LSUSD License Plates Available at Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles

Did you know you can show your school spirit with an LSUSD license plate? Available through the Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles, these specialty plates support LSUSD's Rural Track Scholars Program, which aims to expand access to dental care across Louisiana.

**Order yours today!** For more information, call 504-941-8120 or email [ds-alumni@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:ds-alumni@lsuhsc.edu).



ALUMNI & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

# Newsletter

[ds-alumni@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:ds-alumni@lsuhsc.edu)

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