

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

PROFILES, GATHERINGS & ENGAGEMENT



Alumni Profile: Olivia Sheridan, D'90, GD'92 *Teaching, Inspiring, and Encouraging the Next Generation of Dentists*

APPLICATIONS TO Penn Dental Medicine flood the office of Assistant Dean for Admissions Olivia Sheridan (D'90, GD'92), many of which indicate a long-held desire to pursue dentistry as a career. Many applicants cite a good childhood dental experience or a family member who practices the profession as early career influencers. That so many people consider a career in dentistry early in life still astounds Dr. Sheridan.

"I came to dentistry as a second career," she explains. "I was a goldsmith, and when I just happened to agree to help a dentist friend in his office, I learned how much I wanted more interaction with people and more opportunity

to help others." Inspired by that experience, Dr. Sheridan applied to and was accepted by Penn Dental Medicine, where even more opportunities to explore and participate in dentistry opened for her.

"I was lucky to come to Penn because I didn't realize how big a profession dentistry is. Being here opened a lot of doors for me," she says. "I had great mentors who showed me a world of possibilities."

With her graduate degree earned, Dr. Sheridan joined Penn Dental Medicine's faculty practice, where she still attends patients in general dentistry in the Bryn Mawr office. "But I had my eye on teaching," she says. "I had such great teachers that I was inspired to not only practice dentistry, but also to teach others what I had learned and experienced."

Dr. Sheridan joined the faculty in 2000 and is now an Associate Professor of Clinical Preventive and Restorative Sciences and Co-director of the Dental Auxiliary Utilization program, which offers students clinical experience with patients in all four years of dental school. As a Primary Care Unit Group Leader in the Main Clinic, Dr. Sheridan considers herself a mentor to students as they apply their classroom training to patient care.

"It's a pretty intense program for the students, but it's equally rewarding for them and for me," she says. "Teaching is a marvelous way to learn. I can say that every day at Penn, I learn something, whether that be from a student, colleague, or patient. That intellectual energy is what keeps me here."

With her 25th class reunion approaching this spring, Dr. Sheridan thinks about her own student experience compared to that of the newest class at Penn Dental Medicine. "This is a wonderful generation of students. They are diverse in many ways and involved in many activities, which makes learning at Penn a rich experience for everyone," she says.

"In our accreditation site visit recently, that was one of the comments we heard most often: That Penn Dental's student body is very diverse in both ethnicity and age," she says.

Watching students embrace learning and then evolve into dentists has been a point of pride for Dr. Sheridan for 24 years. "I see them apply what they learn in clinical experiences and then, a few years after graduation, I get to see them again and observe their maturity in the field. When they start to surpass me, I feel a special sort of pride," she says.

Her passion for practice, mentoring, and teaching melded when she also took on the responsibility for meeting with applicants as the School's Assistant Dean for Admissions in 2007.

"Interest in Penn Dental Medicine is stronger than ever, and I am fortunate to travel to many areas of the country to meet with applicants," she says. "I find them bright and engaging, and these candidates are of an exceptional quality."

Equally interesting to Dr. Sheridan is the amount of alumni engagement that keeps the candidate pipeline full. The ADEA indicates that national interest in dental school has increased over the last two decades, on the average, by six percent each year. At Penn Dental Medicine, interest has remained high, resulting in approximately 2,300 applications annually.

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"We know the alumni are out there promoting our school because there is not a week that goes by when I don't get a call or a letter asking me to consider an applicant," she says.

Between her responsibilities in treating patients, teaching and mentoring in class and on campus, and representing the School as she meets prospective students across the country, Dr. Sheridan has found the pace to be intense, but manageable.

"I can't imagine doing anything else," she says. "I might get more sleep if I did, but I couldn't be happier." ■

Lindsay Honzak *Building Young Alumni Programs*

Penn Dental Medicine's Office of Development & Alumni Relations welcomes Lindsay Honzak, who joined the development team in April 2014 as Assistant Director of Annual Giving. In this newly created position, Honzak is responsible for supporting the School's annual giving fundraising efforts as well as alumni stewardship programs and events with a particular focus on young alumni.

Honzak brings nearly nine years of experience in development and marketing to this new role, most recently serving as Assistant Director of Development for the College of Health Professions & Social Work at Temple University.

Through the new young alumni initiative that Honzak is leading, she will be developing special programming and opportunities to engage young alumni regionally as well as at the School. A new gift society, the Young Benjamin Franklin Society (YBFS), geared toward alumni 1 to 14 years from graduation, is also being established. "The YBFS will



acknowledge our young alumni leaders and enable them to become associates in Penn's Benjamin Franklin Society, which forms the most critical base of support for the University," says Honzak.

Honzak encourages young alumni to stay up-to-date on programs and events through a new section of the School's website, www.dental.upenn.edu/youngalumni, and welcomes alumni to reach out to her at lhonzak@dental.upenn.edu.

"I couldn't be more excited to be working with Penn Dental Medicine," says Honzak. "We have some great things in store to help our amazing young alumni stick together to define the future of American dentistry." ■



Dr. Morton Amsterdam Tribute ^

A memorial tribute was held for the late Dr. Morton Amsterdam (C'43, D'45), Professor Emeritus of Periodontics and Periodontal Prosthesis, on August 18, 2014, held as part of the School's White Coat Ceremony. A reception as part of the tribute followed in the School's D. Walter Cohen and Morton Amsterdam Periodontal Clinic.

LEFT: James, D'77, Linda and Sarah Amsterdam flank the portrait of the late Dr. Morton Amsterdam, C'43, D'45, in the D. Walter Cohen and Morton Amsterdam Periodontal Clinic at the memorial tribute.

RIGHT: Dr. D. Walter Cohen, C'47, D'50, and Dr. Joseph Fiorellini, Chair, Department of Periodontics, at the Dr. Morton Amsterdam memorial tribute.