

FACULTY Q&A

SHARING PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL PATHS

WHILE THE PENN DENTAL Medicine community may know the School's faculty by the courses they teach, this Q&A faculty spotlight aims to get a bit more personal glimpse of them as individuals.

For this issue, we talked with Michael Bergler, Director of the CAD/CAM Ceramic Center. He has been part of the School's faculty since 2013.

What have you found most rewarding about being a member of Penn faculty?

First of all, I feel privileged to work in a profession that has been changing so dramatically. While CAD/CAM technology has been around for many years, the developments over the last five years have really affected the way we think in dentistry. Almost every month new materials, new software features, and new production technologies like 3D printing get introduced to the market. It's rewarding as part of the faculty to be exposed to all these new developments and be on the cutting edge of digital technology. Sharing ideas with other faculty members and utilizing the latest digital tools with students to develop new treatment protocols gives unlimited opportunities for growth.

What do you view as your greatest professional accomplishment?

That is a difficult question. When I started as a dental technician in Germany, I was very proud of earning my master's degree in dental technology at 24, as I was considered one of the youngest students to do so at that time. At 26, I gave my first lecture to the German Association in Implantology, and from that point on, got invited to other meetings first in Germany and then other parts of the world. Personally, it wasn't about the speaking engagements, but rather realizing at a certain point that I could impact future generations in dental technology and be part of shaping a profession. Since coming to the U.S. in 2008, one of my greatest accomplishments has been being part of building and directing the CAD/CAM Ceramic Center



Q&A with Michael Bergler

Director, CAD/CAM Ceramic Center

for Penn Dental. Being able to bring the latest technologies and concepts in digital technology to the School and being part of testing and developing new software applications and digital treatment concepts with different departments has been extremely rewarding.

What drew your interest to your particular field and what do you enjoy most about it?

There are many aspects of dental technology what drew my interest. When I first started, I was very focused on creating esthetic ceramic restorations. Since I worked at the University in Germany, I was also exposed to material research and implantology from the very beginning, and I realized how many interesting facets this profession has to offer. Implantology caught my interest; I was fascinated by the complexity and the many different options in designing an implant restoration. I was part of a highly specialized laboratory for implant restorations in Freiburg, Germany, but began to miss the research aspect and returned to the University of Erlangen, Germany in 2001. There I started to gain exposure to CAD/CAM

technology. I got to know software developers and established contacts in the CAD/CAM industry for research and testing the latest digital equipment and my involvement with modern CAD/CAM technology just continued to grow. I love every aspect — software development, milling, digital workflow, material research, and of course, applying it all to patient care.

What advice from a mentor have you carried with you in your career?

My first mentor, Prof. M. Hofmann, chairman of the restorative department of University of Erlangen, Germany, always told me: "Never stop questioning yourself and others" and "Theoretically gained results can never replace practical experience in restorative dentistry". I still carry this advice and it has served me very well throughout my career.

Schools/degrees?

CDT, certified dental technician, University of Erlangen, Germany; MDT, master dental technician, Master School Freiburg, Germany; bachelor's and master's degrees, Germany.

If you could have dinner with anyone who would it be? And why?

As a guitar and rock enthusiast, I would have dinner with Slash, guitarist from the band Guns'n Roses. Actually, I would like to have dinner with the whole band. They all had to overcome all kinds of struggles; I think they'd have interesting stories to share.

Hobbies?

Playing guitar, live music, car racing, traveling, horseback riding, and since I came to the states, I've become a huge wine enthusiast. I recently finished the first wine courses to become a sommelier. ■