

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

VIEWS ON THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE



We're excited to see Penn Dental Medicine continue to blaze trails — as the first dental school to return to operations during the pandemic, our policies have been adopted at other schools and our Penn Pride and resilience continues to shine. While there have been a few speed bumps along the way, our students are adjusting to the new normal and we're proud to continue serving the Philadelphia community. We are privileged to be able to go to school in person because our field of work is deemed essential, and privileged because we still get a sense of normality. With that privilege comes a great responsibility for our collective health. From our fellow classmates and their families, to our patients and their families, and beyond to the Philadelphia community, we are taking great steps and making sacrifices to ensure their safety. Our summer breaks were spent in isolation, our weekends are spent in online happy hour chats, and every interaction outside of our homes is a calculation of the risk and a decision for the common good.

Adapting to a New Normal

Contributed by the Executive Student Council

The sound of a computer fan used to be soothing — a way to note that it was time to study, a monotonous reminder that every day we are getting one step closer to achieving our goals. In March, the sound of a computer fan or an iPad booting up brought with it the dread of the unknown as the global situation changed daily. As we establish our new normal and enter the clinics again, the sound of the computers and online meetings bring with them a new sense of purpose and determination.

This isn't the dental school experience we had expected, but it is an incredible learning experience on crisis management and hammers home how important our didactic education is here at Penn. We've had a great experience working in small seminars with our faculty, many of whom we see in our lecture halls or cited in our lecture slides, but here now in our living rooms, talking to us as colleagues and providing their wisdom and clinical experience in an unfiltered and human manner.



We're excited to see Penn Dental Medicine continue to blaze trails — as the first dental school to return to operations during the pandemic.

We continue to adapt to navigate this new hybrid world. It is with sadness that Executive Student Council halted planning for its welcome activities for the new Class of 2024 and Odontoblast. The spirit of those events lives on, however, as virtual programming is developed with the help of the Office for Institutional Advancement and the Office of Student Affairs. We continue to find ways to develop camaraderie between classes and alumni in a safe manner. We continue developing our community virtually and welcoming the Class of 2024, whose enthusiasm and online presence has been inspiring.

ABOVE: Kristen Leong (D'21), President, Executive Student Council