



## A COLLEGE UPDATE from *Dean A. Isabel Garcia, D.D.S., M.P.H.*

To: UF College of Dentistry

I hope turning the page to 2021 has provided somewhat of a fresh outlook, sprinkled with a little hope after kicking off the new year with access to COVID-19 vaccines, and the opportunity for our college and dental centers throughout the state to begin the vaccination process.

It's hard to believe we have weathered the pandemic for a year now. As they say, it's a marathon and not a sprint. We see relief on the horizon, and while vaccinations are an invaluable first step in protecting our communities, we must remain diligent with practicing all safety guidance including masking, hand-washing and physical distancing. I know we are all eager to put the pandemic in the rearview mirror but it seems we have a bit more open road ahead.

I hope this issue of Fast Forward brings you up to speed on the wide variety of initiatives and activities happening in all areas of our college and leaves you encouraged about great things that lie ahead.

### FLORIDA DENTAL BOARDS

You may recall that at the end of December, Florida Surgeon General Scott Rivkees issued an [executive order](#) allowing simulated manikins in lieu of live patients during the Florida clinical dental board exams this year, a decision all three dental schools in the state support to ensure the safety of students, patients and staff. On February 13-14,

our DMD students completed their Mock Boards in preparation for Dental Boards coming up this weekend, February 27-28.

### COMMENCEMENT PLANS

There continue to be many conversations throughout campus regarding commencement plans for the university and for colleges like ours that host a separate ceremony for our graduates. UF recently announced a return to in-person commencement ceremonies and is developing a set of guidelines to help ensure safety in planning a "COVID-19 conscious" event. With this in mind, we have decided to move our commencement ceremony to the Stephen C. O'Connell Center and have tentatively scheduled our commencement for Friday, May 14, at 4 p.m. Specific details will be shared as we finalize plans for the ceremony, but the O'Connell Center provides us the much-needed space to celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates while keeping each other safe.

### RESEARCH

On the research front, a pause in academic travel and the shutdown of most research operations last spring opened more time for writing manuscripts and grant proposals. The university saw a 7% increase in overall proposals between the first quarter of last year and this year. Those efforts were mirrored in our college as a number of our researchers produced manuscripts and tackled various research areas, including coronavirus-related projects. You can find more about COVID-19 research projects on our website.

### WILDLIGHT UPDATE

Our partnerships throughout the state enabled UFCD dental centers throughout Florida to continue serving the oral health needs of the communities in Hialeah, Naples, St. Pete and Wildlight during the pandemic, and we are thankful for that. We continue to expand care at our newest dental center, UF Health Dentistry – Wildlight, in Yulee and we are now offering orthodontic care thanks to Drs. Dolce and Karanth. Dr. Eric Bauman, who joined us in the fall, has stepped in to lead our efforts at Wildlight as clinic director.

### BUILDING UPDATE

Discussions are continuing between our college and UF leadership, facility services, architects, and project managers from Architects Lewis + Whitlock (ALW). Late last summer, UF contracted ALW, an architectural design firm, to discuss plans for simultaneously addressing the building's façade and the historical water intrusion in the dental tower. They continue to weigh different options for dealing with the "building envelope" and correcting areas where we have sustained damage over the years. Since the mid- to long-term plan is to build a new dental building, the team is prioritizing among potential approaches keeping in mind that repairs/improvements must be done while we continue to work in the current space. As part of a separate project, a new roof has been completed on the south-facing part of the building which will hopefully stop the water intrusion in 3rd floor areas. I will keep you posted of any new developments.

### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

As UF moves forward with a transformational partnership with NVIDIA and creating a range of Artificial Intelligence (AI) opportunities, we are well positioned to be part of the Academic Health Center's effort related to AI and to recruit at least one position as part of this initiative. The current focus is on the recruitment plan and the process for establishing three search committees focusing on 1) Harnessing AI-powered insights for health care decision-making and precision health,

2) Fueling AI-enabled precision to optimize diagnostic tools and therapy development, and 3) Developing AI-enhanced models to illuminate health determinants in Florida. We expect that aggressive recruiting will need to take place, so please share the word with any data scientists that would be interested in this impressive venture.

As I have mentioned several times, I remain deeply impressed by our college's resiliency, and how innovative and productive our faculty, staff, residents and students have been during such an uncertain time. Thank you all for your continued, compassionate work. Take care of yourself, and each other.

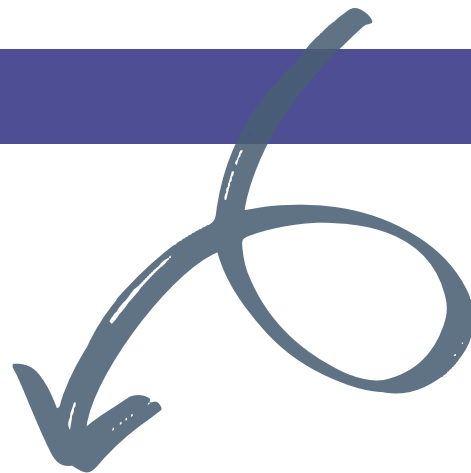
All my best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Isabel', with a stylized, flowing script.



# SUPERIOR

## ACCOMPLISHMENT AWARDS



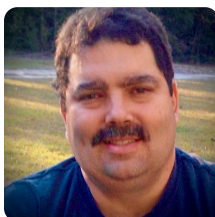
### FOUR WINNERS FROM UFCD



*Maria Aguirre*  
Community Dentistry and  
Behavioral Science  
(PRICE)



*Mindy Lee-Walker*  
Clinic Administration



*Charles Lesch*  
Dental Maintenance



*Aline Teles*  
Periodontology

We are so proud to recognize the College of Dentistry's four Superior Accomplishment Award winners this year. In a year where so many faculty and staff rose to overcome the challenges that COVID-19 presented, there was a large number of very deserving employees nominated who went above and beyond.

That makes UFCD's four winners stand-outs in our division at the UF Academic Health Center!

The Superior Accomplishment Awards program recognizes faculty and staff who have shown efficiency or economy in their work, have contributed outstanding or meritorious service, or who have improved the quality of life provided to students and employees. Each winner was nominated by supervisors, peers or customers who wrote glowing letters of recommendation.

Congratulations to Maria Aguirre, Mindy Lee-Walker, Charles Lesch and Aline Teles, who now advance as nominees to compete for the university-level Superior Accomplishment Awards.

## UFCD HOLLERED



The University of Florida's third annual Gator Nation Giving Day was February 18. Gators around the globe – alumni, students, families, friends, faculty and staff – rallied to give back to UF, raising over \$25,383,005 from 22,198 gifts in just 24 hours.

**OUR COLLEGE WAS NO EXCEPTION! GATOR DENTISTS NEAR AND FAR, CURRENT AND ALUMNI, FRIENDS, FAMILY, STAFF AND FACULTY RAISED \$145,000 (AND COUNTING) FOR UFCD, ALMOST DOUBLING LAST YEAR'S GIVING DAY DONATION TOTAL.**

Stay tuned for our FINAL numbers, and the winner of our inaugural Giving Day Cup competition between all Gator Dentist classes, current and former, and residency programs.



# WELCOMING DR. ERIC BAUMAN AS OUR CLINIC DIRECTOR AT WILDLIGHT

On February 22, 2021, Bauman became the practice director for UF Health Dentistry – Wildlight in Yulee.

Eric Bauman, D.M.D., M.S., joined the UF College of Dentistry in the Operative Division in Restorative Dental Sciences on August 21 as a clinical assistant professor and, on February 22, 2021, became the practice director for UF Health Dentistry – Wildlight in Yulee.

Dr. Bauman brings 13 years of education and professional experience in dentistry with an emphasis on adhesive dentistry and the evolving digital marketplace.

Before earning his dental degree in 2006 from the Oregon Health and Sciences University in Portland, Dr. Bauman attended Villanova University in Villanova, Pennsylvania, where he earned a bachelor's in biology in 2002.

From 2006 to 2020, Dr. Bauman served as a dentist with the United States Navy.

Read more about Dr. Bauman [here](#).



## THE CONVERSATION

Academic rigor, journalistic flair

UF College of Dentistry clinical assistant professor **Andrew Corsaro** recently wrote a piece for The Conversation about the importance of maintaining oral health care appointments, despite being in the midst of a global pandemic.

The Conversation publishes articles written by academic experts for the general public, which are edited by a team of journalists.

Read a snapshot below and click for the full piece!

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**Tooth or consequences: Even during a pandemic, avoiding the dentist can be bad for your oral health**

"Dental care remains critical for tens of millions of Americans, even during the pandemic. More than one-quarter of U.S. adults live with untreated tooth decay, with nearly half of adults over 30 showing signs of gum disease. And nearly 1 in 4 adults report having felt pain in or around their mouth in the past year.

Poor oral health is associated with numerous chronic diseases, including heart disease and diabetes. These problems pose an immediate health risk and require urgent care. Yet, less urgent dental conditions can have long-term negative effects as well."

Read the rest on [theconversation.com](https://theconversation.com).





# Let's celebrate

## VACCINES

We are so grateful to be a part of UF Health, and to have access to COVID-19 vaccines, though it's still pertinent to remind everyone that we must remain steadfast in our commitment to masking and physical distancing for the safety of everyone. If you have any questions or need more information on the COVID-19 vaccine, UF Health has information and resources on vaccine safety, how they work, availability and more on [The Bridge](#).



## 100 % PASS RATE ON PEDS QE

Congratulations to our Gainesville and Naples 2020 graduating residents for a perfect 100 % pass rate on the Qualifying Examination of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry!



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Hats off to our UFCD diversity chairs from each DMD class, who have done a fantastic job during Black History Month to provide thoughtful content, programming and activities that exemplify celebrating Black history and giving back to the Black community.

## BEING TOGETHER IN PERSON

We'll never take hugs and conversing in person for granted again! While following all COVID-19 safety measures, it was wonderful to host Dr. Garcia's former professor from Virginia Commonwealth University at UFCD in January. Pictured below: Dr. Francis Bush and Dr. Bush's lovely wife, Madge.



Special thank you to all who attended our Black History Month fundraiser at Mi Apá, where 25% of each order was donated to the Boys & Girls Club of Alachua County.



## HAVE A LISTEN: FEATURING HIALEAH



### Unstoppable Minds Podcast

A podcast from the University of Florida looking at the challenges and triumphs that come with a life in academia and research.

Hialeah's Dr. Souza and Dr. Benjamin discuss "[Overcoming the Odds and Realizing Dental Dreams](#)" on Season 2, Episode 6 of the podcast, available on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify & Stitcher.

Unstoppable Minds features real stories of students and faculty overcoming challenges to tackle the world's greatest obstacles. Join us as we dive into the breakthroughs and backstories of the people powering real world change from the University of Florida.

## QUICK READ



### Dr. Katz & Team on Vitamin D

Patients with a vitamin D deficiency were four times more likely to be COVID-19 positive than those with a sufficient amount of the crucial vitamin, and African American patients with insufficient vitamin D levels were three times more likely to be infected by the coronavirus.

Insufficient vitamin D has been linked with respiratory infections, and research suggests vitamin D treatment may help lessen symptoms of COVID-19. African Americans are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and vitamin D deficiency compared to other races for a variety of reasons including skin pigmentation, which reduces vitamin D production. [More on the findings here.](#)

## ADMINISTRATION UPDATES



Dr. Colleen Koch



Dr. Bob Burne



Dr. Valeria Gordan



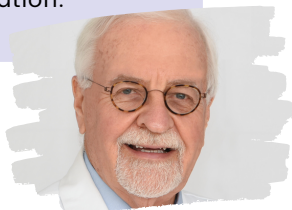
Dr. Cesar Migliorati

- We'd love to formally welcome [new College of Medicine Dean Dr. Colleen G. Koch](#) to the UF Academic Health Center family as of January. Dr. Koch is a cardiothoracic anesthesiologist, came to UF from John Hopkins Medicine, and is the first female physician to hold the appointment. Welcome, Dr. Koch!
- Dr. Robert A. Burne, who has led our college's research enterprise as associate dean since May 2010, [stepped down from that role effective December 4, 2020](#), and Dr. Valeria Gordan was appointed interim associate dean for research.
- Dr. Cesar Migliorati [is stepping down from his role as associate dean of Clinical Affairs and Quality](#) effective March 31, 2021. Migliorati will continue in his role as a professor in Oral & Maxillofacial Diagnostic Sciences and devote more time to teaching, patient care and scholarly activities.



## FEEL-GOOD NEWS

Dr. Frank Dolwick received the 2021 William J. Gies Award for Innovation – Dental Educator from the ADEAGies Foundation.



Dr. Anita Gohel selected as president-elect of American Academy of Oral & Maxillofacial Radiology.



Dr. Marcio Guelmann awarded 2021 Lewis A. Kay Excellence in Education Award from American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.



Dr. Daniela Peinado elected as a member of the FDA Foundation Board.



Dr. Patricia Pereira inducted as a Fellow of the International College of Dentists.



Dr. Roberta Pileggi inducted as a Fellow of the Pierre Fauchard Academy.



UFCD DMD students joined by Dr. Micaela Gibbs and Dr. Jaana Gold, partnered with the Rotary Club of Gainesville and volunteered for house-to-house COVID-19 vaccine canvassing on February 21 for those 65+ in East Gainesville. They collected best mode of contact, answered questions and compiled a list of individuals who need assistance getting access to the vaccine.



## PARTNERING TO IMPROVE ORAL HEALTH FOR THE SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATION

Providing oral health care for those in the state's underserved communities is a passion for faculty, staff, residents and students at UFCD.

*Serving those vulnerable populations with special needs is no exception.*

It's an extension of the college's drive to close the gap in oral health disparities across the state, and it takes a village to collaborate and provide the best possible care for the developmentally disabled population.

Read about how UFCD is improving oral health for the special needs population in Florida through partnerships with the Special Day Foundation, the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation and Henry Schein.

