



## FAST FORWARD

September 2021

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

UF College of Dentistry,

I hope this finds you all healthy and well into the swing of your fall semester routine at our [top-five university](#)! While there have certainly been challenges getting back to 'normal' this fall, it is so refreshing to see each and every one of you – students, residents, faculty & staff – bustling in our halls each day, out on the Sun Terrace enjoying lunch together again, and simply enjoying one another's company in person.

It has been a pleasure to welcome our new advanced education residents, and our DMD Class of 2025 to the UFCD for the start of a new year. The future is bright for Gator Dentists, and I hope you enjoy reading more about the incoming class in this issue of Fast Forward.

### COVID Continues

Indeed, we are all tired of focusing on COVID-19, but we can't ignore that we are still living in the midst of a global pandemic and continue seeing the effects of the virus and delta variant in everyday life. Vaccinations have increased in Florida;

around 3 million people were vaccinated through June, July and August, and numbers at UF Health for COVID-positive patients have steadied. However, only about half of our state – 55% – has been fully vaccinated. There is still work to do to curb the virus, and we must remain diligent.

We continue to follow the expertise of our leaders, including UF Health epidemiologist Dr. Mike Lauzardo, and his simple steps to improve our community's health. **Vax Up:** get vaccinated at one of the [many locations available in our area](#); **Mask Up:** when mandatory, but also indoors to protect yourself and others, and to limit virus transmission; and **Stay Home if Sick:** if you have any symptoms of illness, even mild, please stay home from work or school.

I thank our entire college community for doing a spectacular job of following this guidance and keeping our environment as safe as possible.

With the FDA's approval this week of Pfizer-BioNTech booster shots for those 65 years of age and older and individuals who are immunocompromised or have other medical issues that could result in serious complications and severe COVID-19, and considering ongoing studies regarding the effectiveness of a third dose of COVID-19 mRNA vaccines, Dr. Lauzardo [answered questions in a brief, helpful Q&A last week.](#)

### **Accreditation**

In the meantime, we have much on the horizon for UFCD. As you're probably aware, we are gearing up for our next [accreditation](#) cycle in September 2023. I have already appointed a data working group that has met three times now as our DMD and specialty programs prepare for the intensive and thorough self-study process, outlining how our educational programs meet, or exceed, [standards](#) set by the Council on Dental Accreditation (CODA).

We have identified the leaders of the six ad hoc accreditation committees and a steering committee to address CODA's six accreditation standards. There's no doubt that accreditation brings an additional layer of service, effort and work beyond traditional responsibilities for those involved, and I truly want to thank everyone in advance as we work through the accreditation process and site visit over the next two years.

It's simply amazing that we have hardly skipped a beat through our education, research and patient care missions during the past year and a half, and that's a tribute to the strength of our UFCD family. I hope you enjoy reading about some of our recent accomplishments in this issue, and are as proud to be a part of our college as I am.

I want to encourage you to remain positive, stay the course and, most importantly, to take care of yourselves as we're faced with the ongoing challenges of COVID-19. Take advantage of the well-earned time to rest and recharge when needed.

I continue to be hopeful and optimistic. We're in this together for the duration and the most important thing is your health and happiness, and that of your friends and families. Thank you for your resilience and dedication to our college.

Wishing everyone a wonderful weekend ahead.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Isabel', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

# UF IS A TOP-5 INSTITUTION

*UF is ranked No. 5 on the 2022 U.S. News & World Report list of Top Public Schools*



## A HISTORIC RANKING FOR THE UNIVERSITY

*The state of Florida is now home to a top-five public university*

For the fifth straight year since breaking into the Top 10, UF has climbed in U.S. News & World Reports rankings, this time to the highest rungs.

After five consecutive years of ascension, the University of Florida's performance has positioned UF among the nation's Top 5 ranked public universities, according to the [2022 U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges rankings](#), marking an extraordinary milestone in the university's history.

UF's steady climb exemplifies a unified and sustained commitment at all levels, including the thousands of students, faculty, staff, alumni and donors who strive daily to contribute to the university's culture of excellence and integrity in learning, discovery and invention. UF has advanced a record nine spots since 2017.





*DMD Class of 2025*

## WELCOMING OUR INCOMING DMD STUDENTS AND RESIDENTS

The UF College of Dentistry welcomed 93 new DMD students and 59 new residents in Summer 2021! Our new class of residents represents nine countries across the globe. We're so incredibly proud you chose UFCD.

*AEGD Hialeah – 12*

*AEGD St. Petersburg – 11*

*Endodontics – 4*

*Operative and Esthetic Dentistry Certificate – 2*

*Operative and Esthetic Dentistry MS – 2*

*Oral & Maxillofacial Radiology – 3*

*Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery 4yr – 1*

*Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery 6yr – 2*

*Orthodontics – 4*

*Pediatric Dentistry Gainesville – 5*

*Pediatric Dentistry Naples – 5*

*Periodontics – 4*

*Prosthodontics – 4*



1,563 applicants

688 *in-state*

875 *out-of-state*

93 new Gators

32 *male*

61 *female*

*range in age: 20-38*

Academically

*Science Average*

GPA: 3.75

*Total Average*

GPA: 3.76

*DAT Academic*

*Average Score: 22.02*

Experience range

100-13,520 *hours*



# KYRA MARTIN WINS STUDENT RESEARCH COMPETITION

*Congratulations to first-year Gator Dentist Kyra Martin for earning a trip to represent UFCD in Atlanta next spring.*

On September 21, UFCD DMD and DMD/PhD students had a friendly evening of research competition on Zoom during the college's annual Student Research Competition. Kyra Martin, a DMD/PhD candidate from the DMD Class of 2025, came away with top honors, meaning she will represent the UF College of Dentistry in the SCADA Competition and Awards Program at the IADR/AADOCR/CADR Conference in Atlanta March 24-26, 2022.

Well done, Kyra, and congratulations to her mentor, Dr. Jose Lemos! We're so proud to have you at UFCD, playing an integral part in our research program.

COLLEGE OF  
DENTISTRY



## Kyra's Presentation

*"Characterization of a Putative Oxidative Stress Gene in Streptococcus mutans"*

(Martin K, Kajfasz J, Lemos J)

UF  
UNIVERSITY OF  
FLORIDA



# #GatorsFightFlu

## Get Vaccinated!

UF students, faculty and staff are encouraged to get their flu vaccine. Visit [shcc.ufl.edu/vaccines](https://shcc.ufl.edu/vaccines) or call 352.392.1161 to schedule an appointment.



UFHealth  
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA HEALTH



# GATORS GIVE

## Dr. Garcia's Match

*Dean Garcia will match our college's donation efforts dollar-for-dollar, up to \$1,000!*

## UF Campaign for Charities

*Annually raises nearly \$1 million for more than 100 charities in our very own Alachua County.*

## JOIN US AT SWAMP HEAD OCT. 14

*Calling all Faculty, Staff, Students & Residents!*

We hope you'll join us Thursday, October 14 from 5-8 p.m. at Swamp Head Brewery to support our college and the UF Campaign for Charities. Feel free to bring friends and family; the more the merrier.

We're keeping things safe; we'll be under the pavilion outside, with plenty of picnic tables and room to spread out. Que Bola is the scheduled food truck that evening!

### The Details

- Purchase a \$6 wristband in advance (Venmo @UFCC-Donations) and receive 10% off draft beers (*wristbands will be \$7 at the door*)
- All proceeds from the evening will support the UFCD's contribution to the UF Campaign for Charities
- Questions? Email Jennifer Horn!



SWAMP HEAD®  
BREWERY

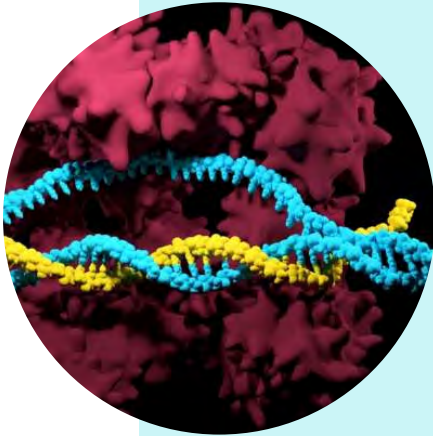
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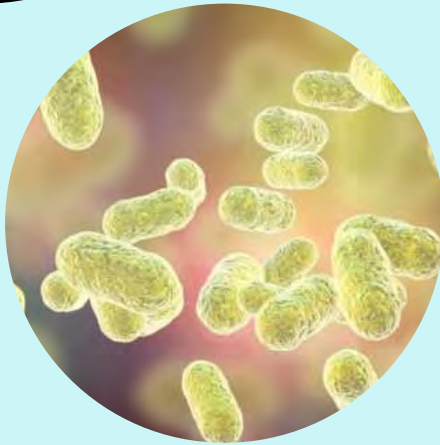
There are several other ways to easily support the UFCC, including payroll deduction and one-time donations. Additionally, enter a drawing for a chance to win a **\$100 Publix gift card!** **1 entry for \$5, 2 entries for \$8, 3 entries for \$10, additional entries \$5 each.** Venmo (@UFCC-Donations) and include your email address for confirmation. **Winner announced at the Swamp Head Social on Oct. 14!**



# RECENT RESEARCH AWARDS



Jorge Frias-Lopez, Ph.D., and Frank C. Gibson III, Ph.D., recently received a five-year, \$3,348,463 grant from the National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, for their project, “A Novel Mechanism of Virulence Control in *Porphyromonas gingivalis*.”



Mary Ellen Davey, Ph.D., and Frank C. Gibson III, Ph.D., received a five-year, \$2,885,264 grant from the National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research for their project, “Microbial Sphingolipids and Suppression of Host Inflammation in Periodontal Disease.”

Seunghee Cha, D.D.S., Ph.D., a professor of oral and maxillofacial diagnostic sciences, received funding from the National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research for her research project, “Targeting P2 Receptors to Restore Salivary and Lacrimal Gland Function in Sjögren’s Syndrome.”



José Lemos, Ph.D., an associate professor of oral biology, received a five-year, \$2.5 million grant renewal for the UF College of Dentistry T90/R90 Comprehensive Training Program in Oral Biology.



# NOMINATE A DESERVING COLLEAGUE!

*Is there someone, in your eyes, who deserves a Superior Accomplishment Award?*

# SUPERIOR

## ACCOMPLISHMENT AWARDS

*Nominations must be submitted by October 29*

Recognition by one's peers is the highest point of achievement. Division-level award recipients receive cash awards of \$200 each, then compete for university-level awards, which offer eight \$1,000 and eight \$2,000 cash awards. The Superior Accomplishment Award Program is an opportunity for all of us to recognize and thank our faculty and staff for their outstanding contributions. In short, it gives us a chance to celebrate the work that helps the mission and success of the University of Florida. Equally, it tells those nominated that their above-and-beyond attitude and contribution does not go unnoticed.

[Nomination Form & Packet](#)

## HEALTHCARE HERO STICKERS

*Vaccinated? Make sure you're recognized as a healthcare hero with a sticker on your ID badge*



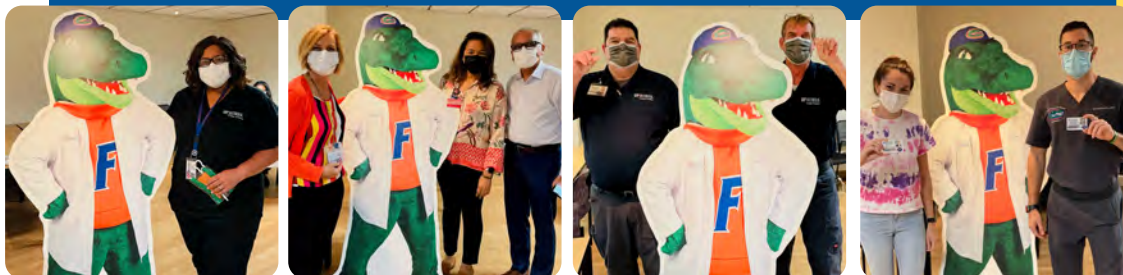
Last month we began adding "Healthcare Hero" stickers to UFID badges after verification of vaccination status (done securely through HR). So far approximately 50% of our college population has received a sticker or completed the process to receive one. This extra step is a symbol to those around you, patients and coworkers alike, that you are vaccinated and may provide an extra level of comfort for everyone. *Thank you Healthcare Heroes!*

**Please note that for students, residents and learners on rotation, proof of vaccination and, thus, your Healthcare Hero sticker, is mandatory.**

UF Health, in line with most hospital systems including the Veterans Affairs hospitals, announced that all learners and trainees who come into contact with patients as part of their clinical rotations, training or clinical research must be fully-vaccinated by October 15.

### Vaccine Verification & Sticker Distribution

- To receive a badge sticker you need to provide proof of your vaccination status. Fully-vaccinated is defined as having received one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, or two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.
- Complete the [COVID Vaccination Confirmation/Verification form](#).
- Scan/Take a photo of your vaccination card.
- Email the completed pdf and the scan/photo of your vaccination card to [hr@dental.ufl.edu](mailto:hr@dental.ufl.edu). This is a secure email account that only College of Dentistry Human Resources staff can access. Your information will be kept secure and confidential.
- Stop by the Dean's Office front desk for your Healthcare Hero sticker.







# Screen. Test. Protect.

## COVID-19 Vaccines

*It goes without saying that we highly recommend speaking with your physician if you are still hesitant about the COVID-19 vaccine and its effectiveness.*

If you are not yet vaccinated, you are strongly encouraged to receive a vaccine. Even with the exponential spread of the dental variant, vaccines have shown strong protection against severe disease, hospitalization and death. If you have any health concerns related to vaccination, please speak to your medical care provider.

To schedule a vaccine, visit <https://one.ufl.edu/> or walk in during open UF Health Pharmacy hours. Detailed information and open hours for UF, UF Health and Alachua County walk-up vaccinations is available on [UF Health's vaccination website](#).

## Booster Shot Information

*Dr. Michael Lauzardo, deputy director of UF's Emerging Pathogens Institute, recently spoke about issues related to the third vaccine dose.*

On Wednesday, the FDA approved a single booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for certain populations, including adults 65 years of age and older, and individuals who are immunocompromised or have other medical issues that could result in serious complications and severe COVID-19.

Federal officials continue to urgently study the effectiveness of a third dose of COVID-19 mRNA vaccines.

[Dr. Lauzardo sat down with UF Health for a very helpful Q&A session about what vaccine booster shots are, how they differ from the initial immunization & much more.](#)

