



GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Mentoring Professionalism

A program of the
Texas Section
International
College of Dentists



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Student Handbook



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In the beginning...

In 2007, the Texas Section of the International College of Dentists President Dr. Moody Alexander was inspired during a Dallas County Dental Society (DCDS) leadership class to create a program aimed at first-year dental students. He hoped to expose dental students to positive professional mentors who they could emulate in their future practices. Meetings were arranged with representatives from Baylor College of Dentistry (BCD) administration, including Dr. Jack Long and Ms. Moira Allen, Texas ICD and DCDS members in which collaborative efforts defined the organization, structure and purpose of the program. Texas ICD President-elect, Dr. John Chandler proposed the name “Great Expectations” and Dr. Mark Gannaway, BCD’s Director of Comprehensive Care, Restorative Sciences, volunteered to become the Program Director for the faculty-driven program.

In 2008, the American Dental Association awarded DCDS a Golden Apple Award for its involvement in the mentorship



program. With a focus on small-group interactions with upper-class students, faculty and practicing dentists, “Great Expectations: Mentoring Professionalism” seeks to inspire ethical, professional dentists by providing insight and support at the beginning of their training.

In 2010, a group of leaders within the program developed a strategic plan outlining the long term mission and core values.

The mission of Great Expectations is to ***“Mentor professionalism by building relationships between dental students, faculty and practicing dentist.”***

The Core Values are:

- Integrity
- Personal Accountability
- Trust and Respect
- Leadership
- Professionalism
- Camaraderie
- Commitment to the Profession
- Service to Community
- Lifelong Learning

The mentors in Great Expectations strive to live and practice by these core values so that through our example and words of encouragement you will find professional success.

What you can expect:

You can expect to build a network of support that is dedicated to your success. Great Expectations will introduce you to people within the profession that are eager to help as you start along your professional path. Although the program is limited to your first year, we hope to develop relationships that you will find useful throughout your career in dentistry. We realize that your time is very valuable so we will limit the number of scheduled meetings. We hope that you will make the most of these experiences and use us as a resource if you need additional support.

Our meetings include an ice cream social in which you will meet your group, a gourmet dinner provided by the Dallas County Dental Society, a couple of visits with your small group and a large group year-end event.



How should I use this manual?

We encourage you to use this manual as a resource and to bring it to each event. Space is provided so that you can take notes on things that impact you throughout the year. We would also like for you to write down the contact information of the mentors that you meet. As you record their information please ask each mentor how they can help you in the future. The mentor will provide you with a specific area in which they have insight or past experience. Be sure to record this information so that you may seek their counsel in the future. We all face similar problems throughout our professional career. It is foolish to make the same mistakes when we have the chance to learn from others. When you reach one of these roadblocks, remember this manual and all of the people that have committed to helping you succeed.



Thoughts from Great Expectations Mentors

I wish I had known my first year that...

- Everyone is in the same boat: either we paddle together or we just go around in circles.
- Every semester gets a little better, more exciting and hands-on with dentistry. I should've kept up better (not procrastinated) with the certain classes (like micro) that didn't force you to keep up through weekly quizzes. I needed to study on my own before studying in groups.
- My professors would be such a wonderful resource and be my colleagues for life.
- The freshman year is the most challenging of all four years of dental school, but you can do it! Four years of dental school will fly by quickly, so time management requires a proactive, focused effort to schedule a balance of your study (work) time with self (family) time, fun time, and worship time to maintain sanity. That same effort towards balance is important to apply throughout the rest of your dental career and life. Although rarely will you achieve an ideal balance, it is important to make up for imbalances the best you can.
- I should manage my time better. That I should have talked with the faculty sooner. That I should have picked a group/person to study with sooner.

- Right now the educational process is the #1 priority in your life. This is not the time for compromise. Dedication to the task at hand is paramount. It will pay dividends in terms of the opportunities you will have in the future.
- You should never forget to have fun. Dental school is challenging, quite possibly one of the most difficult things we will go through but the success you will gain from stressing about the little things, and not taking the time to have fun along the way, will both impede your academic success as well as drive you crazy! The friends you make in dental school will be some of the best you will ever have and the strength of the bonds you make will surprise you. There's more to life than dental school. Take time to have fun and do the things you love with the ones you love.
- Social life outside of school is important, even if it is minimal.
- I should have explored the options that are available after graduation to have a better understanding of what I needed to accomplish while in school. Begin with the end in mind!
- I needed a better understanding of the clinical correlations of the basic sciences we were learning. This is hard though because without the dental education being side by side it is hard to understand one without the other.

Thoughts from Great Expectations Mentors

I wish I had known when I graduated that...

- I should've done better in creating my curriculum vitae during dental school. I wish I could've had an accountant go through an example of a dental practice's financial statements and that I would have asked more questions when some of those consultants came in.
- The most important thing is to first decide where you want to live and raise your family. You are equipped to be successful anywhere, however targeting growth areas or assuming an existing practice will create quicker cash flow and typically a quicker pay-off. Always minimize your debt and save to buy rather than borrow when you can.
- I need to learn more practical clinical stuff like 'real world dentistry' - through good CE courses. You will find how enjoyable being out of school is.
- I should have learned more practice management concepts and business practices.
- We are trained to practice dentistry, not own and run a business. Therefore, learn about business or find a good attorney to look over contracts and a good CPA to advise you in what you can afford.
- Many people say that the most they ever knew about dentistry was just after graduation. On the contrary, never stop learning. Continue your education and always strive to be better tomorrow than you were today.

- I needed to be better informed of the various career choices available in Dentistry. I assumed following dental school that the opportunities would be principally in private practice. I should have researched options and been more knowledgeable of the various career choices that were available.
- There are several different solutions to any given problem...some of which are not so obvious...and that sharing problems and solutions with colleagues builds your knowledge base as well as life long friendships.
- Knowledge is not wisdom. Dental school can teach knowledge but wisdom comes from making mistakes and then learning how to avoid and fix them. Consequently, I may not be a lot more knowledgeable than when I graduated but I am getting much wiser.
- An excellent cabinet maker friend who is in his mid-90s once asked me if I knew the difference between a really good cabinet maker and a mediocre cabinet makers. I replied that I thought that good cabinet makers didn't make mistakes. No, he replied, really good cabinet makers know how to fix their mistakes! I think this applies to dentistry as well.



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Marketing Professionalism