“... because it is so wonderful to know the impact you have.”
— William T. Reid, D.D.S.

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On the cover: The University of Florida D.M.D. Class of 2021 received its professional coats during White Coat Ceremony on July 14, 2018, at University Auditorium on the UF campus.

You’re Invited!

FLORIDA DENTAL CONVENTION
Gator Dentists Reception
Friday, June 28, 2019 | 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Emerald Plaza Atrium
Dear Alumni & Friends,

The year 2019 marks the official start of our college’s new five-year strategic plan, making it a great time to pause and reflect on what we have accomplished in recent years and where we are heading over the next five years as a college, a university and a profession.

We have focused on strengthening alliances and partnerships across the University of Florida campus and within the UF academic health center environment, refining our predoctoral and advanced education programs, and acquiring resources that will further enhance our world-class dental school. Our award-winning research enterprise, which has always been outstanding, continues to gain in stature and is now ranked No. 5 out of 65 U.S. dental schools for funding from the National Institutes of Health.

One of our strongest resources is our outstanding base of alumni and friends. Your support takes shape in many different ways — through mentoring our students and residents, welcoming aspiring dentists and specialists to shadow you in your practices, volunteering in our teaching clinics and as lecturers, and participating in service-learning trips in addition to the financial support you so generously provide our college. When I have the opportunity to spend time with our alumni and friends, I am consistently impressed by the energy and spirit of pride you have in being a Gator Dentist and everything that phrase means to you. Thank you for your steadfast support of our mission and vision to thrive as a global leader in education, research, patient care and service.

I have learned being a Gator Dentist means excellence in all things — being dedicated oral health providers, lifelong learners and leaders in education and research. The enthusiasm with which you say “Go Gators!” matches your enthusiasm for being a Gator Dentist. I truly appreciate being welcomed into this special group and look forward to continuing to advance the wonderful accomplishments of this exceptional dental school.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Gator Dentist Today!

Warm regards,

A. Isabel Garcia, D.D.S., M.P.H.
Dean
William T. and Jackie C. Reid

For Gator Dentists currently practicing, those planning to retire, and those who just retired, William T. “Terry” Reid, D.D.S., has one message: “Don’t miss this window of opportunity. Fund now, give back to the college now; it’s what you should be doing for your own edification and for the edification of the students who are still in school. If you wait until you’re gone, you won’t ever develop relationships with the students you’re supporting.”

Reid and his wife, Jackie, have been married 52.5 years, and have a decades-long relationship with UF dating back to the 1960s. He earned his pharmacy degree in 1966 and Jackie earned her journalism degree in 1965.

“There’s no question that the Reids ‘bleed orange and blue through and through,” as Gator Boosters with scholarships established in the College of Dentistry, and also in the UF colleges of Pharmacy and Journalism. Back then, tuition was $133 a semester for Reid’s pharmacy education and he made it through with the help of several scholarships. As Reid put it, a $300 scholarship in journalism was a Christmas gift established two years ago. “We didn’t want our daughters to have to make a decision after we’re gone about where our support would go,” Reid said. “We said, ‘let’s make the decision now, during our lifetime.’” They haven’t, for one second, questioned that decision over the past 21 years.

“We have built some of the most fantastic relationships and had so many good laughs and so many moments where we were choked up and could barely speak because it is so wonderful to know the impact you have. We could tell stories all the way through from 1998 to now — having meals with the students, getting to meet them and hear about their parents and families. It’s priceless, it’s absolutely priceless,” Reid said.

First year D.M.D. student Rhonda Sneij, a Miami native fresh off her Class of 2022 White Coat Ceremony, is the current beneficiary of the Reid’s dentistry scholarship.

Sneij, who has a vibrant smile and personality, is a lot of things: youngest sibling to three brothers and a sister, a Christian heavily involved with church and mission trips back home, a committed volunteer for those who are underprivileged, and a graduate of the University of Miami who majored in chemistry and minored in mathematics and political science.

Sneij’s fascination with dentistry led her to volunteer on her church-funded dental mobile unit, and has fueled her desire to be a part of the college’s educational service trips; she’ll head to Guatemala in August. But part of what Sneij so special is the adversity through which she’s journeyed to get to dental school at UF. Sneij lost both of her parents — Syrian natives — to colon cancer, her mother in high school and her father in 2017.

“It has been a difficult road that I have been on, but it just makes me appreciate life so much more and has taught me the desire to pay it forward to others, just like Dr. Reid,” Sneij said. “I was blessed with the opportunity to enter the UF College of Dentistry. It has been an amazing journey so far, and I work hard to make God, my parents and my family proud.”

According to the American Dental Education Association, the average educational debt for all U.S. indebted dental school graduates in the Class of 2018 was $285,184. While UFCD dental graduates’ debt level, including undergraduate debt, is lower than the U.S. average, educational dental costs are a pressing concern for dental students and administrators alike.

“The great amount of loan debt that we accumulate during our dental journey can be quite discouraging. Having the support from alumni and friends like Dr. Reid makes the journey a bit more endurable,” Sneij said. “You learn about people who are supporting your dream without even knowing you and it sparks hope in your heart.”

On a sunny day last fall prior to the Gators versus South Carolina football game in The Swamp, Reid and Sneij had their first opportunity to meet and connect over breakfast — they talked about life, about dental school and more. “Rhonda is extremely bright and personable, she’s talented and family-oriented. She’s no fail when she sets out on her career, no matter what path she chooses,” Reid said. “Anyone who comes to her for professional services is going to feel relaxed, they’re going to feel confident, and they’re going to feel like they’re in the best possible hands; she really exemplifies all of that. That’s what struck me right away.”

There was a level of comfort and familiarity for Sneij as well. “When Dr. Reid approached me with open arms ready for a warm hug, I knew the meeting was going to be less like a business meeting and more like a friendly gathering,” Sneij said. “We shared stories and laughter the entire conversation as if we had known each other for years. Dr. Reid is both a selfless and humble individual who has already greatly impacted my life, directly and indirectly.”

One of the topics of conversation that day was Reid’s service in the Air Force, a leap Sneij had been considering. After having her questions answered, concerns and doubts addressed by Reid, Sneij ultimately applied to be a dentist in the Air Force.

“Dr. Reid is the epitome of whom I want to be upon graduating dental school.”

And for the Reids? “You just can’t put a value on what we get from our relationships, and how much we enjoy this. It’s truly priceless.”

If you are interested in making a gift to the UF College of Dentistry, please contact Rick Miller at rmiller@dental.ufl.edu or 352-273-5779.
Dentistry and Nursing: Working Together to Help Underserved Patients

With the help of a grant from the Florida Blue Foundation, the UF colleges of Dentistry and Nursing are collaborating on an innovative project to improve health care for vulnerable populations while providing valuable interdisciplinary learning for students.

The three-year, $286,000 Advance Innovation and Promote Solutions in the Health Care System grant will allow the UF College of Nursing’s community primary care practice, UF Health Archer Family Health Care, or AFHC, to work with the UF College of Dentistry’s on-campus DMC clinics. Both settings care for individuals that lack access to health services. The project, the first of its kind in Florida, is led by dentistry’s Cesar Migliorati, D.D.S., M.S., Ph.D., and nursing’s Denise Schentrup, D.N.P., APRN, a clinical associate professor and the associate dean for clinical affairs for nursing.

“Underprivileged populations face many difficulties in accessing medical and dental care, which prevents these individuals from achieving total body and oral health,” said Migliorati, a professor and the associate dean for clinical affairs and quality. “With this partnership, our dental students will work under professional supervision of dentists and a nurse practitioner to demonstrate a new model of medical and dental care and decrease complications for patients.”

The project will provide point-of-care service, a two-directional referral source and communication between nursing and dentistry sites to solve two specific problems facing both clinics. At the student dental clinic, care is delayed for a significant portion of patients at the time of procedure due to incomplete health assessments and evaluations. Patients are redirected to their primary care provider, if they have one, to obtain a clearance to be treated. Meanwhile, about 60 percent of AFHC’s patient population has limited access to timely dental evaluation and treatment.

To solve these problems, an advanced registered nurse practitioner is now embedded in the student dental clinic to provide immediate medical assessment, treatment and referral to primary care for dental patients, as needed. Health assessments completed immediately by the nurse practitioner would allow for dental care to continue without delay.

If the nurse practitioner determines a more in-depth medical consult is necessary or if patients have an untreated chronic disease, the nurse practitioner can initiate a referral to a medical facility, such as AFHC.

In addition to the benefits for patients, students will be introduced to a unique interprofessional model of practice while learning how to manage medically compromised patients and how to communicate effectively with fellow health care professionals about patients’ problems.

“This grant will create a partnership that will bridge the gap for health care services,” Schentrup said. “It will also serve as a stepping stone for future projects between nursing and dentistry and give students the opportunity to have interprofessional clinical practice experience. Student exposure to and adoption of innovative models of care are paramount to making changes in health care delivery.”

On the AFHC side, a licensed clinical social worker will be hired to connect patients to the College of Dentistry for dental treatment.

First-Year D.M.D. Student Katherine Richmond Commissioned an Ensign in U.S. Navy

On October 5, first-year D.M.D. student Katherine Richmond was commissioned an Ensign in the U.S. Navy as part of the Health Professions Scholarship Program, continuing a tradition of service among faculty, staff and students at the college in all branches of our military.

The occasion was made all the more special with Katie’s fellow D1s, her family, Dean Isabel Garcia, D.D.S., M.P.H., and Thomas L. Bowers IV, D.M.D., M.D., FACS — who performed the commissioning ceremony — all in attendance.

Bowers, a clinical assistant professor of oral and maxillofacial surgery and undergraduate program director, practiced for three years with the National Health Service Corps before serving on an operational platform — a ship, with the Marines or with the Seabees (U.S. Naval Construction Battalions) — for two years.

Richmond, a four-year Division I soccer player at UF and the University of Southern Mississippi, will receive significant financial assistance with her dental school expenses in exchange to agreeing to serve for four years in the active component of the Navy, followed by four more years in either the active or reserve component.

Following graduation and Officer Development School — five weeks of basic training for professionals — Richmond will have the opportunity to be selected for a general practice residency or advanced education in general dentistry program before serving on an operational platform — a ship, with the Marines or with the Seabees (U.S. Naval Construction Battalions) — for two years.

On the AFHC side, a licensed clinical social worker will be hired to connect patients to the College of Dentistry for dental treatment.

From left: Isabel Garcia, D.D.S., M.P.H., Katherine Richmond, D.M.D. Class of 2022, and Thomas Bowers, D.M.D., M.D., FACS
Identify a problem, work toward a solution

In 2005, more than a third of children from low-income families in Collier and surrounding counties had no access to basic dental care; 17,000 children were suffering from untreated tooth decay and acute dental problems.

The problem was clear, so a group of organizations implemented a solution. The University of Florida College of Dentistry and the Naples Children & Education Foundation, founders of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, founded the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center on the Florida SouthWestern State College campus in Naples to provide access to care and improve the oral health of children in the community.

Primarily funded by grants from the NCEF, the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center has since completed over 135,000 patient visits in the past decade, including specialized care for children whose oral health needs are complex and require care in hospital operating rooms.

Two young sisters living in the area, Johanna and Elaina Backstrom, know all about complex care requiring surgery. “Johanna and Elaina both had to have surgery in the hospital, their teeth were so bad,” Jacqueline Backstrom, the girls’ grandmother, said. “Elaina had been in pain for a while with her teeth before we could get everything set up on our end for their care.”

Johanna, 7, and Elaina, 5 — or ‘Jo’ and ‘Lani’ — moved from Iowa to Naples a year ago after their grandparents took temporary custody.

Elaina was in a lot of pain,” Jacqueline said. “Every day we were administering Motrin, she could only eat things she didn’t have to chew; they both obviously needed dental care. Elaina’s teeth were rotted clear to the gum. Johanna had bad teeth, but they weren’t as deeply affected.”

The Florida Department of Children and Families helped guide the Backstroms to the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center, where director Lauren Governale, D.M.D., M.P.H., and the staff and dentists at the center took the girls under their wings. Backstrom sings praises about the professionalism and care Johanna and Elaina received, including the preparation and lead-up to a potentially scary experience in the hospital for their care.

“The staff, dentists and everybody associated with the dental center are so professional and so caring. They really wanted to get us in there; they were helpful with getting everything set up. It was a great experience, really,” Backstrom said. “The kids weren’t afraid. By the time they spoke with them in the hospital, the children were at ease. It was wonderful.”

Extractions, spacers, crowns — it took the whole nine yards — to restore the oral health and health of the girls’ teeth, at the same time easing the financial burden for the Backstrom family.

The NCEF Pediatric Dental Center accepts some private insurance, as well as Medicaid and Healthy Kids-CompDent.

“The dental center is just such a blessing to this community. Without their support and their care I don’t know what some of these kids would do, I really don’t. We live in Naples, but of course not everyone takes their insurance — especially in Naples, it’s very difficult. If it weren’t for the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center, it would be tragic for this community and the children of the community that can’t afford to just go anywhere.”

The socioeconomic status of many in Collier and the surrounding counties is something Jacqueline and her husband have witnessed firsthand, having spent time volunteering with at-risk youth in the area. While Jacqueline’s husband, a native Floridian, used to pastor a church in Immokalee about an hour northeast of Naples, the Backstroms would be ruined for life. They could be making money in private practice, but the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center is making a sacrifice for our community.”

Most good stories have happy endings, and the Backstroms have one, too. The oral health needs of Johanna and Elaina are being addressed, dad has custody and the whole family is under one roof now. The two sisters love taking jazz and tap class, playing at school, fishing and doing anything outdoors.

Best of all, they’ve made a home not only in Naples this past year, but at the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center.

NCEF Pediatric Dental Center Administration Transition

In 2008, the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center opened in Naples as a collaboration between the UF College of Dentistry and the Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida. The building and project were initiated and funded by the Naples Children & Education Foundation, which has remained a generous supporter over the past 10 years.

The center is a unique program for the UF College of Dentistry. Located within the Collier Campus of Florida SouthWestern State College, the center houses a highly competitive CODA-accredited pediatric dental residency and supports a community education and prevention program. From 2008 to 2019, the Healthcare Network handled the staffing and program administration and UFCD faculty directed the educational and clinical programs.

On January 1, 2019, the college took over administration of the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center in Naples. This transition brought the dental center in alignment with the college’s standard operations at dental centers throughout the state, where the college handles all clinical, financial and administrative aspects.

The center continues to provide the same level of comprehensive pediatric dental care, including the management of cases in the operating room in partnership with local hospitals, and anticipates no interruption in service to patients, or to the education of our pediatric dentistry residents.
Collaboration with UF Engineering Focuses on Novel Coatings to Prevent Oral Infections

They say ‘team work makes the dream work’ and UF College of Dentistry researcher Josephine Esquivel-Upshaw, D.M.D., M.S., an associate professor in UF’s Department of Restorative Dental Sciences Division of Prosthodontics, has been collaborating on a cross-professional research team with UF’s Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering Departments of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science Engineering.

Their dream? Novel, strong protective coatings for dental ceramic materials that minimize corrosion and prevent oral infections.

Their team? A research cohort of 15 interdisciplinary student and faculty researchers from the two colleges. Esquivel-Upshaw and her team had a fruitful 2016 year that enabled them to capitalize on a National Institutes of Health, or NIH, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research grant, as well as a UF Opportunity Seed Fund Award.

Alongside Esquivel-Upshaw, recently retired UFCD professor Arthur Clark, D.M.D., Ph.D., and the team received a $3.2 million, five-year NIH-NIDCR R01 grant for the project, “Novel coatings to minimize bacterial adhesions and tooth wear in denture acrylic.”

“We are working on developing an antibacterial coating for dentures, but we are still in the in vitro stages,” Esquivel-Upshaw said. “We’ve tried a couple of antibacterial coatings. Now we are trying to incorporate them into the actual material – and materials science and engineering is testing that; we’re looking at different chemicals to incorporate.”

The next step for each project? Clinical trials are planned for further research on the ceramic coating. A clinical trial for the denture coating is still down the road. As a result of these projects, patents have been filed with UF’s Office of Technology and Licensing. Esquivel-Upshaw is a prosthodontist. Her research areas of interest include ceramics, dental materials, implants, wear of enamel and clinical research.

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The team has expanded its research through two diversity supplement grants, and is also observing the effects of the coatings on bacterial adhesion to the surface. Although testing is ongoing, there are indications that the coatings may also have an antibacterial role.

Like many research projects, there are a lot of balls in the air, and another major area of research stemming from the team’s funding is the development of an antibacterial coating for dentures. Collaborating with restorative dental sciences, periodontics and chemical engineering, the UF Opportunity Seed Fund Award is supporting the project.

Josephine Esquivel-Upshaw, D.M.D., M.S., and the novel coatings interdisciplinary research team

Collaborative Partners
On the engineering side, Fan Ren, Ph.D., is a distinguished professor with the UF Department of Chemical Engineering and the primary collaborator on the project. His research specializes in transistor design and fabrication, including dielectric coating. Ren has worked on laser facet dielectric coatings to improve laser performance and reliability.

Christopher Batich, Ph.D., is a materials science professor in engineering and was the founding director of the UF Graduate Biomedical Engineering Program and chief operating officer for the UF Clinical and Translational Science Institute. Batich is also collaborating with the team, examining the effect of microstructure of these ceramics on their corrosion resistance and how special coating techniques can affect this process.

Roger B. Fillingim, Ph.D.

The Pain Research and Intervention Center of Excellence, or PRICE, and the UF Institute on Aging, or IOA, were awarded a five-year, $1.9 million grant from the National Institute on Aging to establish a new center – the UF Resource Center for Minority Aging Research, or RCMAR.

The National Institute of Aging is one of 27 institutes and centers at the National Institutes of Health.

Under the leadership of principal investigator Roger B. Fillingim, Ph.D., director of PRICE and a professor at the UF College of Dentistry, the center will pursue two primary goals. The first is promoting the diversity of the workforce in aging research by identifying, supporting and mentoring promising investigators from underrepresented backgrounds. The second goal is enhancing the health of older populations by conducting state-of-the-art interdisciplinary research on the social and behavioral contributions to pain and disability among older adults.

“Pain is a major public health problem across all ages, but it is a particular concern for older adults who are at greater risk for pain and tend to experience pain that is more widespread and more disabling,” Fillingim said. “We are particularly excited that the UF Resource Center for Minority Aging Research will allow us to provide training and support for investigators who will address these complex issues related to pain and aging. These scientists represent the future of pain and aging research, and we hope that their work will lead to reduced pain and improved quality of life for older adults.”

A partnership between PRICE and the IOA, the UF RCMAR truly represents a team effort as the leadership includes faculty members from three UF colleges and five different departments. The center will be housed at UF’s Clinical and Translational Research Building, and the faculty will comprise a multidisciplinary group of talented and productive scientists whose expertise spans the spectrum of clinical and translational research related to biopsychosocial contributions to pain and disability among older adults.

For the five-year period spanning 2018-2023, UF RCMAR is one of 18 sites funded by the National Institutes of Health’s Institute on Aging, up 11 sites from the last five-year grant period from 2012-17 that featured seven sites across the country. The institute funds multiple resource centers with the mission of decreasing health disparities in minority elders through research, mentoring, improved recruitment and retention methods for research studies, creating culturally sensitive health measures with greater precision, and increasing the effectiveness of interventions.
UFCD Strategic Plan 2019-2024
Quick Reference

Education
Develop and Sustain a Learner-Centered Educational Environment

Excellent education, guided by and grounded in sound scientific evidence, develops students for success as skilled professionals and effective leaders.

Our students, residents and faculty participate in interdisciplinary learning and research that benefits the college and its community of patients, and is guided by well-rounded curricula that produces professionals skillful in the art and science of dentistry. We will employ innovative, evidence-based educational models to prepare our students and residents for success and continued effectiveness in a rapidly changing health care environment.

Patient Care
Provide Excellent, Patient-Centered Oral Health Care Grounded in Evidence

The highest quality oral health care is evidence-based and patient-centered, meeting the needs of our highly diverse community of patients.

UFCD has a longstanding reputation as the primary source for top-quality, affordable oral health services to residents of Gainesville and surrounding areas, as well as in other Florida communities via our community-based dental centers. As a premier U.S. dental school with residency training in every specialty recognized by the American Dental Association, UFCD will strive to become a top destination for advanced or specialty care in all aspects of oral health care.

Research
Support & Advance Preeminent Basic, Clinical, Translational and Population-Based Research

A vibrant research enterprise maintains the spirit of discovery that brings to life intellectual curiosity and enhances clinical acumen afforded through scholarship.

A strong research portfolio is a hallmark of UFCD’s accomplishments, reputation and success. A thriving research environment ensures that students, residents and faculty remain at the leading edge of biomedical knowledge and practice. Through research, we assure that patient-care is optimally effective.

Environment
Enhance and Maintain a Supportive and Humanistic Environment

UFCD is a premier destination for dental patients, a top educational choice for students and residents, and a stimulating working environment for faculty and staff.

An organization can only be strong when its human capital is united. Students, faculty and staff at UFCD form a special community linked through interests, knowledge, science, curiosity and compassion. We will create an inclusive, supportive and respectful climate that embraces and values diversity — acknowledging that with diversity, we gain a broader foundation of strength, wisdom and creativity. We will foster an environment of support, trust, effective communication, responsible and ethical behavior, and maintain an ongoing commitment to respect within our own institution while we provide care for others.

Infrastructure
Upgrade and Expand Teaching, Research and Clinical Care Facilities and Infrastructure

Centralized and efficient management of UFCD operations and development best supports our ability to be an outstanding institution.

UFCD’s outstanding students, faculty and staff make up the core of our excellence as an institution. Yet to stay at the leading edge of teaching, research and care, we must invest strategically in infrastructure improvements. These efforts will pay off in improved patient care and safety, stronger research and educational programs, and an expanded pool of patients.
REVENUES BY SOURCE $73.9 MILLION

State General Revenue $23,335,246 32%
(includes tuition & fees)

Clinical Collections $20,089,708 27%

Miscellaneous Income $7,457,594 10%
(includes GME & clinical service contracts)

Grants $13,290,700 18%

Research Foundation ($611) <1%

Trust $7,588,409 10%
(other revenues, auxiliaries, including CDE)

Florida Foundation $2,221,676 3%

Other Restricted Revenue ($65,280) <1%

Strategic Funds Revenue $10,728 <1%

Total revenues $73,928,169

Current overview

12 degree & certificate programs

365 DMD students

148 advanced education students

5 out of 65 dental schools for NIH funding

46 years educating dentists to serve Florida residents

15 dental centers in the UF Statewide Network for Community Oral Health

Patient Visits to College-owned Clinics

Research Funding $14.9 Million

$600,000 UF/UFCD Funding

$840,000 Non-Federal Funding

$13.5 Million Federal Funding

100% MATCH

After earning their dental degrees, many graduates pursue a postdoctoral education in a dental specialty program, or continue their education with an advanced education in general dentistry residency program. Each year, between 30 and 50 percent of the UF College of Dentistry’s new graduates continue with postdoctoral or specialized education, Associate Dean for Education Venita Sposetti, D.M.D., said. This year, 100 percent of enrolled Gator Dentist students – and two alumni – seeking specialty programs and advanced education matched in Phase I of the Postdoctoral Dental Matching Program, or Match 1; Match 1 is the first portion of a two-part annual matching program, and matches postdoctoral candidates with programs in orthodontics, periodontics, prosthodontics, dental anesthesiology and Canadian general practice residency training programs. The second phase, Match 2, matches applicants with postdoctoral programs in advanced education in general dentistry, general practice residency programs in the U.S., oral and maxillofacial surgery and pediatric dentistry. Results from Match 2 were available to applicants in late January.

“We are extremely proud of these students for their hard work and diligence,” Dean A. Isabel Garcia, D.D.S., M.P.H. said. “This success is also a testament to our faculty who continue to deliver such outstanding education.”

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COMMITTED TO DENTAL EXCELLENCE

DEPARTMENT OF CONTINUING DENTAL EDUCATION

GATOR DENTIST TODAY / SPRING 2019
**Dilbone Appointed Chair of Restorative Dental Sciences**

Deborah Dilbone, D.M.D., was appointed permanent chair of the UF Department of Restorative Dental Sciences effective April 16, 2018. Dilbone had served as interim chair of the department since May 2016. “Dr. Dilbone has done an outstanding job proactively leading the teaching, research, service and clinical activities of the department and assisting in the career development and mentoring of RDS faculty. Looking forward, she will continue her focus on aligning the mission of the department and its divisions, creating processes and policies that can help guide their work, and developing methods for coordination and regular communications among the three divisions and directors,” said A. Isabel Garcia, D.D.S., M.S., dean.

Dilbone earned her dental degree from UF in 1993 and became a visiting professor in the UF Department of Prosthodontics in 1994 and a clinical instructor in the Department of Operative Dentistry in 1997. She taught in the Internationally Educated Dentists Program, or IEDP, from 1997 through 2008 and in operative clinical and preclinical courses with dental students from their first through their fourth years since that time. Dilbone worked in private practice before joining the IEDP program. She served as the director for the Division of Operative Dentistry from 2012 through 2016.

Dilbone serves on many college committees and is the course director for Dental Anatomy and the Stomatognathic System. She is the college’s liaison for the American Dental Education Association, or ADEA, Commission on Change and Innovation in Dental Education and serves on the Practitioner Advisory Committee for the National Dental Practice-Based Research Network’s South Atlantic Region. She was a fellow of the 2017-2018 ADEA Leadership Institute and was recently named the 2017 ADEA/ ADEAGies Foundation Drs. Connie L. and Richard R. Disko Scholar in the ADEA Leadership Institute.

She is an active member of many local, state, national and international dental organizations. She is passionate about education and works diligently to improve the educational experience and learning outcomes of our students. Her research interests focus on education, cariology and improving overall health assessments of patients. “I am very grateful that Dr. Dilbone has agreed to accept this critical leadership position. She has infused the department with her sense of energy and positive outlook and is truly making a difference,” Garcia said.

**Riley Appointed to Faculty Affairs Role**

Joseph Riley III, Ph.D., was appointed interim associate dean for faculty affairs effective July 23, 2018. Riley is a tenured professor in the UF Department of Community Dentistry and Behavioral Science, the director of the Pain Clinical Research Unit in the UF Pain Research and Intervention Center of Excellence, and also serves as the deputy director of the South Atlantic Region of the National Dental Practice-Based Research Network.

“A key aspect of the faculty affairs responsibilities include implementing mentoring and recognition programs; overseeing changes to, and compliance with, the promotion and tenure processes; and serving on relevant UFCD committees. ‘Dr. Riley is truly a pleasure to work with. He has a calm demeanor and a positive attitude and I am very confident that those traits will be very valuable for our administration and for the faculty he helps guide,’ Garcia said.

Riley joined the college 22 years ago when he was completing his fellowship in behavioral dentistry. In 1998, he became an assistant professor in the newly formed UF Division of Public Health, part of what is now the UF Department of Restorative Dental Sciences. Eventually that division became its own department, the UF Department of Community Dentistry and Behavioral Science. Riley was promoted to associate professor in 2005, and to professor with tenure in 2011, all with community dentistry and behavioral science.

While he has remained immersed in research, Riley has been actively engaged in UFCD faculty searches and has been a long-time member of the UFCD Research Committee and the Student Performance Evaluation Committee, among others.

An active researcher, his interests involve the study of behavioral and psychological influences on health, particularly in the biopsychosocial model of pain and behavioral factors in oral health. He is well-known nationally and internationally for his expertise in pain processing and modulation.

**GIBBS APPOINTED INTERIM CHAIR OF COMMUNITY**

Micaela Gibbs, D.D.S., M.H.A., a clinical associate professor in the UF Department of Community Dentistry and Behavioral Science, or CDBS, has been appointed interim chair of the department effective October 12, 2018.

Gibbs has served on faculty since 2003, where she has directed the college’s Community-Based Programs since 2007. In addition, she oversees the UF Statewide Network for Community Oral Health and became the coordinator of Global Service Learning in 2018. Gibbs earned her dental degree from the University of Colorado in 1994 and completed a general practice residency and a fellowship in Head and Neck Oncology at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

Gibbs’ focus will include continuing to grow the impact of the department by maintaining its successful community outreach, clinical and research missions, strengthening the scholarly and educational base, and encouraging cohesion with other academic groups within the college.

She takes over the leadership role of the department from Scott Tomar, D.M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H., who was interim chair since February 2015, having previously served as permanent chair from 2005-2009.

Tomar has taken on a new role as director of institutional analysis and evaluation, and will work closely with Dean A. Isabel Garcia, D.D.S., M.P.H., to develop, prioritize and carry out analyses to support institutional planning, evaluation and effectiveness at the college. This includes leading the process for institutional surveys, identifying and pursuing funding opportunities that can support college initiatives regarding educational, access-to-care and performance improvement.

Tomar will also collect relevant information, analyze data and develop summaries that articulate the economic, health and social impact of UFCD’s programs.

**DENTISTRY AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE, ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION**

Tomar, D.M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H.
Welcoming New Faculty

A member of the UF Dental School Class of 2017, **Michael A. Aguirre, D.M.D.**, recently joined the college as an adjunct clinical assistant professor in the department of oral & maxillofacial surgery.

Most of Aguirre’s time is overseeing care in the Student Oral Surgery Clinic working with predoctoral students. He is also involved in some didactic and preclinical instruction. Aguirre attended Nova Southeastern University, where he earned his bachelor’s in science with a minor in chemistry in 2013 before returning to Gainesville, his hometown, for dental school. Following graduation, Aguirre completed a general practice residency at the Malcolm Randall Veterans Affairs Hospital in Gainesville. As a dental student, Aguirre was in the Pi Omega and the Alpha Omega dental fraternities and served as the community service chair of the Student National Dental Association.

**Emily J. Bartley, Ph.D.**, is not new to the UF College of Dentistry, having been here since 2012, first as a postdoctoral research fellow and then as a research assistant professor. She has now joined our faculty as an assistant professor in the department of community dentistry and behavioral science in August 2018.

Bartley earned her bachelor’s degree in psychology in 2000 and her master’s in clinical psychology in 2006, both from Pittsburgh State University in Pittsburgh, Kansas. She then completed a preclinical internship at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina, in their Department of Psychiatry in 2012, and earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Tulsa in Tulsa, Oklahoma, also in 2012. She has extensive research, clinical training and teaching experience and is a member of the American Pain Society, the American Psychological Association, the National Headache Foundation, the Organization for the Study of Sex Differences, and the International Association for the Study of Pain. She currently co-chairs the American Pain Society’s Psychosocial Research Study Interest Group and has served as an associate editor for Pain Research and Management since 2016.

In addition to teaching responsibilities, Bartley spends her time pursuing her current research project, Adaptability and Resilience in Aging Adults, for which she has a K99/R00 award from the National Institutes of Health National Institute on Aging.

Carlos Ribeiro Camargo, D.D.S., Ph.D., joined the UF College of Dentistry as a clinical assistant professor in the department of restorative dental sciences division of general dentistry in May 2018. Camargo oversees the planning and delivery of care in the predoctoral clinics as one of the Team Leaders and also provides care in the UF Health Faculty Dental Practice in general dentistry.

A native of Brazil, Camargo earned his dental and master’s degrees from Sao Paulo State University, Brazil, in 1993 and 1996, respectively. He earned a doctorate in endodontics from the University of Sao Paulo in 2002 and received his certification in endodontics from the Sao Paulo Council of Dentistry in 2007. He went on to complete postdoctoral work in cell culture at the University of Regensburg in Germany in 2007 and, in 2018, completed postdoctoral studies at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, in tissue engineering.

Camargo brings with him a great deal of teaching experience. At Sao Paulo State University, he served as a teaching assistant (1996-2002), an assistant professor (2002-2008), and an associate professor (2008-2018). While there, he was selected for the Dentistry Professor of the Year Award seven times. He has presented at numerous national and international symposiums, published journal articles, editorials and abstracts, and also participates in research endeavors.

In August 2018, **Andrew Corsaro, D.M.D.,** a clinical assistant professor, joined the UF Department of Restorative Dental Sciences Division of General Dentistry. A team leader, Corsaro’s primary responsibility is teaching predoctoral students in the clinical setting, as well as providing some didactic and preclinical teaching. Corsaro is also working as an assistant to the college’s associate dean for clinical affairs and quality, helping oversee and manage clinic-related concerns, operations and special projects. He is also providing care for patients in the college’s faculty practice as a general dentist.

Andrew Corsaro earned his bachelor’s in biology in 2007 and his master’s in biomedical science in 2009, both from Florida Atlantic University in Jupiter, Florida. He then earned his dental degree from UF in 2013.

After graduation, Corsaro worked at Anderson Dental in West Palm Beach, Florida, from 2013 to 2018, and was a senior dentist at the Florida Department of Corrections in Sanderson, Florida, before joining the college.

He has been a teaching assistant at Florida Atlantic University and at UF, and has served as a courtesy faculty member for the college since 2017.

He is also a captain in the Florida Army National Guard, serving as a dentist overseeing diagnosis, and dental classification and readiness for more than 5,000 Florida Army National Guard members.

In October 2018, **Poliana Duarte, D.D.S., M.S., Ph.D.**, joined the UF College of Dentistry as a visiting clinical associate professor in the department of periodontology. Her primary responsibility is providing periodontal didactic, preclinical and clinical teaching to predoctoral dental students. Duarte is also teaching residents as part of periodontology’s graduate program. She is also providing patient care in the Periodontal Faculty Practice and will be pursuing clinical/translational research as well.

Duarte earned her dental (1999), master’s (2002) and doctoral (2004) degrees from the Piauicaba School of Dentistry in the Campus State University in Sao Paulo, Brazil. She earned a certificate in implant dentistry in 2004 from the Brazilian Association of Teaching in Dentistry, also in Sao Paulo.

She worked in private practice in Sao Paulo from 2000 to 2018 and served as an associate professor in periodontology at Guarulhos University’s Dental Research Division in Sao Paulo. She has been involved as the principal and collaborating writer on 112 published research studies, contributed to six books and served as the principal investigator for eight research studies. Her most recent study was, “Influence of risk factors for chronic periodontitis in the systemic and local immunoinflammatory profiles.” Duarte has also mentored postdoctoral, doctoral and master’s students during her time in higher education.

In 2015, she earned her certificate and master’s in operative dentistry from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where she was also a resident and graduate teaching assistant. She then moved to Buffalo in 2015 when she joined the SUNY faculty. In addition to her primary focus of teaching the predoctoral and operative master’s students, Guha will be caring for patients in the college’s UF Health Faculty Practice.

In June 2018, **Matthew Hansen, D.D.S.**, joined the college as a visiting clinical assistant professor in the UF Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Diagnostic Sciences Division of Radiology. Hansen, who earned his certificate in Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology from UF in 2017, teaches predoctoral students and residents learning about radiological services. He also works with the college’s faculty practice reading radiology reports as well as working on his research.

He earned his bachelor’s degree in 2009 from Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, then earned his dental degree in 2013 from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is a member of the American Society of Head and Neck Radiologists, the American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology, and the Radiological Society of North America, as well as the American Dental Association, the Colorado Dental Association, the Metro Denver Dental Society and the Academy of General Dentistry.
Welcoming New Faculty

Hansen’s previous teaching experience includes working as a laboratory instructor at Weber State University, and teaching radiographic interpretation and techniques at UFCD from 2015 to 2017.

In August 2018, Carlos Soucy, D.D.S., M.S., joined the UF Department of Restorative Dental Sciences Division of Prosthodontics as a clinical associate professor. He is spending the majority of his time teaching predoctoral and graduate students, with a focus in prosthodontics, and also provides care to patients in the college’s UF Health Dental Faculty Practice.

Soucy earned his dental degree in 1993 from the Universidade Central de Venezuela in Caracas, Venezuela, and then attended the University of Texas in Houston, Texas, where he earned his master’s and a certificate in prosthodontics in 1997, after completing an extended participation program in prosthodontics there in 1994. He was a Fellow in prosthodontics from 1996 to 1997, and then an assistant clinical professor at the University of Texas Houston Dental Branch from 1997 to 1998. From there he served as an assistant professor with the Universidade Central de Venezuela from 1998 to 2004, where he taught postgraduate courses for a general practice residency program and dental esthetics.

Soucy also worked in private practice from 1998 until 2016, when he joined the UF College of Dentistry this year.

Nicholas Kaleel, D.M.D., joined the college faculty in August 2018, as a clinical associate professor in the department of restorative dental sciences division of general dentistry. Kaleel earned his bachelor’s degree in 1975 from Youngstown State University in Youngstown, Ohio. In 1980, he graduated with his dental degree from the University of Louisville School of Dentistry where he also completed a general practice residency in 1982 at the Veterans Affairs Hospital.

Kaleel was in private practice from 1980 to 1984 in Ohio, and then moved to Boynton Beach, Florida, where he ran a practice specializing in complex restorative dentistry, implants, periodontal therapy and esthetic dentistry from 1984 to 2011. From 1995 to 2011, he was also a dental consultant to the Bethesda Memorial Hospital Department of Surgery.

After selling his practice in Boynton Beach, he joined the faculty of the University of Louisville School of Dentistry, Louisville, Kentucky, in the department of general dentistry and oral medicine, where he was an assistant professor from 2014 to 2018 before joining UF.

Kaleel is a team leader in the predoctoral clinics, and he spends most of his time working with the dental students and overseeing their treatment planning and delivery of patient care.

Andre Reis, M.S., D.D.S., Ph.D., joined the UF College of Dentistry as a clinical associate professor in the department of restorative dental sciences division of operative dentistry in October 2018.

Reis primarily focuses on providing didactic, preclinical and clinical teaching to predoctoral students and residents in the operative master’s program. He also delivers patient care in the UF Health Faculty Dental Practice.

Reis moved to Gainesville, Florida, from Sao Paulo, Brazil, where he had worked in private practice since 2005 and also served as an associate professor in operative dentistry at Guarulhos University, or GU, since 2006.

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Reis attended the Piracicaba School of Dentistry at the University of Campinas, or UC, in Brazil where he earned his dental degree in 1999 and his master’s in operative dentistry in 2002. He began his doctorate studies there as well but finished at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, or UNC, in 2005.

Reis has a great deal of academic experience. In addition to his time on faculty at GU, he served as a teaching assistant and a visiting scholar at UNC in 2004, and an instructor at UC from 2000 to 2003, and in 2005.

His research interests include resin-tooth adhesion, resin-based composites, clinical trials, dental biomaterials, electron microscopy and ceramics. He is a member of the International Association for Dental Research, the Academy of Dental Materials and the Brazilian Society for Dental Research.

Tsuyoshi Tanaka, D.D.S., M.S.D., earned his dental degree in 1992 and his master’s in clinical dentistry from the National Institute of Health.

She received a K22 award from the National Institutes of Health for her current neuroscience project, “Neural mechanisms underlying psychosocial contributions to ethnic group differences in pain.”

Terry serves in the U.S. Army from 2001 to 2008 and received a Purple Heart in 2004. She is a member of many professional associations, including the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, the International Association for the Study of Pain, and the American Pain Society and is the current co-chair for the American Pain Society’s Geriatric Pain Shared Interest Group.

After recently completing an implant fellowship at the UF College of Dentistry, Tsuyoshi Tanaka, D.D.S., M.S.D., a clinical assistant professor and periodontist, joined the college faculty in October 2018, and is serving as the program director for the periodontology aspects of the D.M.D. curriculum. He is also working with the periodontology graduate program, providing patient care in the UF Health Faculty Dental Practice and pursuing his research interests.

Tanaka earned his dental degree from the Tokyo Medical and Dental University in Japan in 2010, then attended the Indiana University School of Dentistry, where he earned a certificate in periodontology in 2016 and served as chief resident. He also completed an advanced education in general dentistry program in 2017 at Boston University’s Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine.

From 2011 to 2013, Tanaka worked in private practice in Japan before moving to the United States to further his education. He is a Diplomate of the American Board of Periodontology and also completed intravenous sedation certification.

Ellen Terry, Ph.D., a research assistant professor in the department of community dentistry and behavioral science, joined the college as a faculty member in April 2018, and is working with the UF Pain Research and Intervention Center of Excellence, or PRICE.

Terry earned her bachelor’s degree in psychology in 2008 from the University of Texas in Arlington, Texas, graduating magna cum laude. In 2010, she earned a master’s in clinical psychology from the University of Tulsa in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she also completed her doctorate in clinical psychology in 2015.

She came to UF as a postdoctoral associate in PRICE. From 2016-2017, Terry spent two years with the UF Integrative and Multidisciplinary Pain and Research Training Program, funded by a T32 fellowship award from the National Institutes of Health.

Terry’s focus is on pain-related research. In 2018, she received a K22 award from the National Institutes of Health National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke for her current neuroscience project, “Neural mechanisms underlying psychosocial contributions to ethnic group differences in pain.”

Wong attended Canada’s University of British Columbia in Vancouver, British Columbia, where she earned her bachelor’s degree in microbiology and immunology in 2005 and her dental degree in 2009.

Her postgraduate training included a general practice residency, and a diploma and a master’s in prosthodontics, all at the University of British Columbia. She then completed a fellowship in oral oncology and maxillofacial prosthetics in Houston, Texas, at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in 2016.

Wong worked in private practice from 2009 to 2013, and also has years of teaching experience at the University of Texas and the University of British Columbia, where, most recently, she was on faculty as a clinical assistant professor.

Her research interests include quality of life and symptom burden of head and neck cancer survivors; prosthetic versus surgical reconstruction of patients undergoing resections of craniofacial structures (post-maxillectomy, mandibullectomy, facial resection); prosthetic and surgical reconstruction of gunshot wounds/trauma; and 3D printing of maxillofacial prostheses.
Former Dean Don L. Allen Passed Away

Don L. Allen, D.D.S., former dean of the University of Florida College of Dentistry, passed away on June 22, 2018. He joined the college in its fledgling years, serving as interim dean from June 1973 to September 1974, and as dean from September 1974 to October 1982.

During that time, he oversaw the move of the UF College of Dentistry, which had been operating in several temporary locations, into the dental tower. He was here when we began providing care to our first patients and presided over the commencement of our first graduating class of 24 dentists in 1976. He also ushered in the establishment of advanced education programs and the continuing dental education program, which began in 1981. After leaving UF, he served as dean of the University of Texas School of Dentistry.

Allen received his undergraduate diploma from Elon College. He earned his dental degree at the University of North Carolina School of Dentistry, followed by a master’s in periodontics from the University of Michigan. He was the president of the International College of Dentists in 1982.

Allen was born and raised in Burlington, North Carolina. He is predeceased by the love of his life Winnie Allen, his wife of 53 years, and Margaret Allen Small, his sister. He had three children, Don L. Allen Jr. and wife Lisa; Michael D. Allen and wife Ginger; Susan Allen Bossley and husband Clinton. He also has five grandchildren, Catherine, Sarah, Elizabeth, Tyler and Hannah, and one great-granddaughter, Charlee. A private memorial was held at Crescent Beach, which was his favorite place to spend time with family.
Florida Dental Convention, June 2018

Each year, when Florida dentists and oral health providers gather for the annual Florida Dental Convention, the UF College of Dentistry hosts several events on Friday, including business meetings of the Academy of Alumni & Friends and an annual Gator Dentist Reception. Gator Dentists, their family, friends and staff members had a chance to touch base with colleagues and classmates during the reception.

Dental Fall Weekend, November 2018

Several hundred Gator Dentists and their friends and family enjoyed a quick snap of cool, fall-like weather in Gainesville in November during 2018 Dental Fall Weekend. Friday’s events included a donor recognition luncheon and class reunions for the DMD classes of 1978, 1983, 1988, 1998, 2003, 2008 and 2013. Saturday morning started with a continuing education course, followed by tours of the college and a pregame tailgate. The weekend’s events were capped off by a Gator football win in the game against Idaho.

We want to thank everyone who made it back to Gainesville for the weekend’s activities and look forward to an even larger turnout in 2019!
Once a month, Alan Fetner, D.M.D. class of 1980, and his wife, Mary Hartigan, D.M.D. class of 1982, travel from Jacksonville, Florida, to Gainesville and work alongside residents and predoctoral students in the University of Florida College of Dentistry’s periodontology and prosthodontics center. They’ve made this trip, unfailingly, for many years.

Some might say they come to UF to volunteer their time and expertise. But Fetner and Hartigan say that they’re here to learn, to reenergize themselves, and to give back to a college that has played a part in giving them, “great lives, great careers and a great family.”

Fetner says that being at the college and working with today’s students and residents helps him and Hartigan build and maintain strong relationships with faculty, and continues the ongoing connection they have felt to the school since they were students.

Fetner’s first job after dental school graduation was as a teacher at UFCD. “I think it gave me a taste of what education was like from the other side and I really enjoyed it.”

Fetner stresses that, as faculty, they have to remain humble enough to learn from the students and residents.

“Educators are supposed to inspire their students, but working with the students also inspires us.”

Dental school teaches you to think, to problem-solve, to approach challenges from more than one perspective and then choose the solution that is best for that patient, he said. His best moments are when he thinks that he knows the ‘right’ way to solve a problem, but then a student proposes another option that may be even better.

“In this profession, we should always be elastic. Always willing to learn a new method and open to innovation and technology. One of the fun parts of being in the dental school is that, on any given day, you can have a team of experts from different specialties considering a problem and solving it together,” he said.

Each time, what they learn in that setting trickles down to how he and Hartigan treat patients in their private practice as well.

There are people who work to live. And there are those that, through luck and commitment, are able to earn their living doing something they love. Fetner and Hartigan love dentistry. And they love the profession, the people, the service, and the UF College of Dentistry where it all began.

Fetner notes that when he’s speaking or lecturing, the first thing that’s said when he is being introduced is, “earned his dental degree and periodontal training at the University of Florida.” “I realize that I am always representing UF. I didn’t just earn a diploma I could hang on my wall. The diploma means something to me and I feel like, through my actions and decisions, I need to protect it,” Fetner said.

Fetner and Hartigan are also both triple Gator graduates. Both earned their undergraduate, dental and specialty degrees in periodontics from UF. Fetner and Hartigan’s periodontal practice opened in 1988, and includes two additional Fetners. Their sons, Michael, a graduate of the D.M.D. class of 2010, and Alex, who graduated in 2011, both grew up hearing about dentistry at the dinner table and chose to make it their careers as well. It’s a family of great Gator Dentists and we’re fortunate to have them as a part of our college.

The Fetners gathered for Alex Fetner’s wedding in October 2018, with six UFCD dental graduates, four periodontists and one dental graduate from the University of Pittsburgh
Annual gifts from our generous alumni and friends help us maintain our tradition of excellence. Our most important partners are individuals who believe in our mission and support our work at a leadership level, providing a foundation for success. We are grateful to everyone who supported our college during the fiscal year June 2017–July 2018.
Annual Gifts continued

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Providing Oral Health Care in Hurricane Michael’s Impact Area

In October 2018, Hurricane Michael pummeled the Florida Panhandle. The hurricane was the first Category 4 storm on record to make landfall in the Panhandle and the third-most intense to hit the U.S. in recorded history. The storm caused approximately $15 billion in damages to communities in Florida, Alabama and South Carolina, leaving entire blocks of homes and towns completely decimated; bare, except for concrete, sand and splintered wood.

Two months later in December, UFCD had an opportunity to serve residents in the Panhandle who were still suffering the effects of Hurricane Michael. Collaborating with Remote Area Medical on December 12-17, thanks to a generous $5,000 donation from the American Dental Partners Foundation and Christie Dental, a contingent of UFCD faculty and students embarked on a humanitarian outreach mission to Callaway, Florida.

In addition to its premier education and top-five research enterprise, the college provides patient care and service for residents in all 67 counties in Florida through the UF Statewide Network for Community Oral Health. Service is a key component of the college’s four-year predoctoral curriculum and service learning trips are unique opportunities that provide practical experiences important in the development of future dental practitioners.

Micaela Gibbs, D.D.S., M.H.A, interim chair of community dentistry and behavioral science and a clinical associate professor, led the charge for the UFCD group that traveled to Callaway – a small community a half-hour east of Panama City. Ten third-year UF dental students, along with Gibbs and faculty members Olga Luaces, D.M.D., and Timothy Garvey, D.M.D., assisted in the delivery of care, and supported the oral health needs of patients in the devastated region.

The group, which also included two other dentists, provided emergency, basic operative and preventative dental services to 230 patients over two days in tents in a Walmart parking lot. The patients they saw told a story of the hurricane’s effects on oral health care in the area and learned that about 50 dentists were still unable to treat patients two months after Hurricane Michael’s landfall.

Gibbs was emotionally impacted by serving the patients in Callaway. She said while she expected to see the damage to structures and the environment, she was struck by the emotional and physical issues that local residents were suffering from, long after media attention had turned in other directions.

“In my career, I have participated in countless service projects. This was, by far, the most gratifying volunteer experience I have ever had,” Gibbs said. “These people had been living without so many things we take for granted, and at that point there was still no end in sight for many of them. I was honored to be able to provide care for them.”

The students also distributed blankets and clothing they collected from members of the college before leaving for the trip.