

# SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE

The mission of the School of Dental Medicine is to educate predoctoral and graduate dental students in the highest quality clinical and research environment.

The school's core values are consistent with the Penn Compact 2020:

- **Inclusion:** We value diversity and respect for all
- **Innovation:** We expand knowledge through cutting edge research; We use the latest technology and evidence based practices in teaching and clinical care
- **Impact:** We provide high quality comprehensive dental care in all clinics; We make a difference in educational, research and clinical outreach initiatives locally and globally

The School of Dental Medicine advances oral health by educating clinical dentists and fostering leaders in research, education, clinical care and service both locally and globally. Faculty and students strive toward eminence by increasing access to oral health care and professional education, integrating knowledge across disciplines, and engaging with our local, national, and global communities by continued innovation and research.

The School of Dental Medicine excels in discovering new knowledge in fundamental biology and dental medicine and disseminates this knowledge through discovery-oriented methodologies enhanced by the latest technologies. The School excels in instruction, research, and patient care in dental medicine and inspires, demands, and thrives on the need to continuously improve the quality of programs, produce future leaders, and be the best in all of its pursuits.

The School of Dental Medicine's activities in research, teaching, and clinical care promote lifelong learning relevant to a dynamic society and a rapidly expanding, multidisciplinary body of knowledge. The School of Dental Medicine is committed to share this knowledge through a comprehensive range of service activities with the local, national and global communities.

The School of Dental Medicine community values the diversity of its constituents and supports free expression, reasoned discourse, and diversity in ideas. The School of Dental Medicine fosters the growth of humane values and the highest ethical standards among students, faculty, and staff, and values its professional and community affiliations throughout the world.

**For more information:** <https://www.dental.upenn.edu/about-us/vision-mission-statements/>

## History

The School of Dental Medicine is among the oldest university-affiliated dental institutions in the nation. Its historic ties trace back to the Philadelphia College of Dental Surgery, established in 1852. In 1856, the faculty of the Philadelphia College of Dental Surgery formed the Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery when the former closed, and in 1878, the Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery Dean, Dr. Charles J. Essig, was asked to join the University of Pennsylvania, founding the School of Dental Medicine as the Dental Department of the University of Pennsylvania. He would serve as the School's first Dean from 1878-1883.

The Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery would eventually merge with the University of Pennsylvania in 1909.

The School's first facilities were housed in Medical Hall (now Claudia Cohen Hall). The following year it moved into its own building, Dental Hall, which was designed and constructed for its particular needs.

In 1897, Thomas W. Evans, a Philadelphia native, who became the dentist to the courts of Europe during France's Second Empire and confidant of Napoleon III, left his estate to create and maintain a dental school that would be "second to none." Evans' generosity made possible the construction of the Evans Building (officially called the Thomas W. Evans Museum and Dental Institute) which opened in 1915, the best-equipped dental building in the nation at that time. His boldness and spirit of leadership have continued to guide the School throughout its history of expansion and innovation both in curriculum and in clinical and scientific facilities.

Throughout its history, Penn Dental Medicine has grown in size and has consistently been at the forefront of dramatic changes that have characterized the profession of dentistry during that time. Nevertheless, Penn Dental Medicine has remained faithful to its original mission: "to prepare students for qualification for dental practice, to provide graduate training for qualified practitioners and to create the opportunity and facilities for scientific research in dentistry."

Since its founding, the dental education program has maintained its leadership role in dental education and research by preparing distinguished graduates capable of functioning in the many roles the profession demands: scientist, diagnostician, clinician, artist, engineer, teacher, and business manager. The School is committed to offering an education that advances both the art and science of dentistry, and prepares its students for leadership in the profession.

For more information: <https://www.dental.upenn.edu/about-us/history/>

## Research

The School of Dental Medicine has a rich history as a research intensive institution and continues to be an international leader in the generation of new knowledge and treatment modalities to improve oral health.

As members of one of the world's leading biomedical research communities, faculty from Penn Dental Medicine actively pursue interdisciplinary collaborations to advance the practice of dentistry. The University of Pennsylvania has top-ranked Schools in each of the health professions—Dental Medicine, Medicine, Nursing and Veterinary Medicine—located on a single, contiguous campus, as well as renowned Departments in Materials Sciences and Bioengineering (School of Engineering) and the basic sciences (School of Arts & Sciences). Interdisciplinary scholarship and translational research are hallmarks of the University and significantly enhance Penn Dental Medicine's research enterprise.

Penn Dental Medicine places a high priority on research as it is a central component of excellence in instruction and patient care. With its own basic science faculty (unusual among dental schools nationwide), the School's research enterprise is broad and encompasses many areas of contemporary biomedical investigation with emphasis on both basic and clinical scientific research.

Research within the School focuses on the structures and functions of tissues and fluids and microbial flora in the oral cavity. Investigations range from oral microbiology and virology, inflammation and immunity,

tooth development, mucosal disease, salivary gland disease, orofacial pain and the use of analgesics and sedatives, to the cellular biology of connective tissues and bone, the application of state-of-the-art dental materials, the causes and effects of periodontal disease, the oral delivery of protein drugs, and the relationship between mesenchymal stem cells and orofacial diseases at the molecule and cellular levels. Collectively, Penn Dental Medicine's research enterprise spans scientific disciplines to translate new knowledge into clinical therapies that expand our understanding of oral diseases and advance patient care.

For more information: <https://www.dental.upenn.edu/research/research-overview/>

## Community Outreach

Being engaged in the surrounding community and striving to make it a better place is a key piece of Penn's mission and educational goals. Through the School's varied outreach and service-learning programs, Penn Dental Medicine students provide much-needed oral health services to the community, while broadening their understanding of public health issues. These academically based service-learning programs provide students and faculty with the framework to complete community-based activities as an essential, required component of academic course work. In total, students log approximately 16,000 service hours each year in both required and elective community experiences and the honors program.

This integral part of the curriculum takes students outside of the School's clinics and campus to connect with diverse segments of the public and come to understand the impact of social, cultural, and economic forces on oral health care. The service learning programs are also an innovative and sustainable model for increasing access to care within the community and provides dental students and faculty with multiple opportunities to work with community partners in existing service programs where oral health education and services can be readily implemented. The required nature of students' activities ensures that all students receive a consistent level of mentored community activities, and provides a consistent presence in oral health programs organized with agency partners in the community.

For more information: <https://www.dental.upenn.edu/admissions-academics/dmd-program/community-outreach-service-learning/>