



# THE INCISAL EDGE

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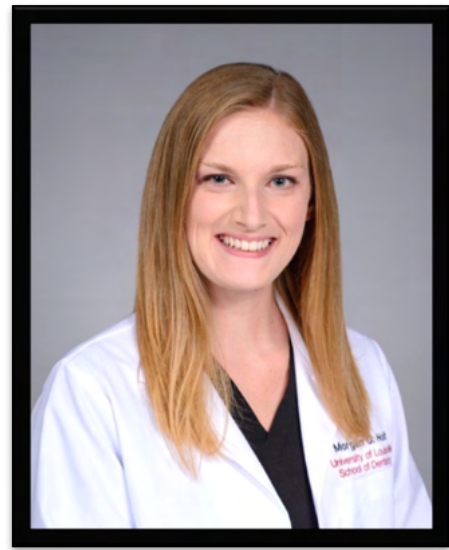
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## Vision and Purpose

The American Student Dental Association (ASDA) is a national student-run organization that protects and advances the rights, interests and welfare of dental students. It introduces students to lifelong involvement in organized dentistry and provides services, information, education, representation and advocacy. LASDA is The University of Louisville's chapter of ASDA. We also serve as the dental school's student government. We provide social events, outreach projects, advocacy opportunities, leadership development, wellness, networking opportunities, lunch and learns, and improvements around the school.

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



**Morgan Holt**  
**Class of 2024**

Welcome to the Fall 2021 edition of the Incisal Edge! I am very excited to be releasing my first Incisal Edge as 2021-2022 editor, and I am looking forward to what next semester holds.

First, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this semester's newsletter. Thank you to all who submitted articles and took time to contribute their stories from anything and everything LASDA. In addition, thank you to the photographers, Sarika Polcum, Josh Montgomery, and Susan Harrison, who graciously shared their amazing work.

If I had to describe this issue in one word, that word would be perseverance. The past year and a half have not been easy for most. As a ULSD family, we have dealt with the stress of virtual learning, the strain of protecting our health, the loss of a classmate, and much more. However, my hope for this newsletter is that you may see the goodness in this year as well. From social events and the clean-up downtown initiative to the opening of our new student success center, I have been reminded of how thankful I am to be a small part of the ULSD family.



# PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

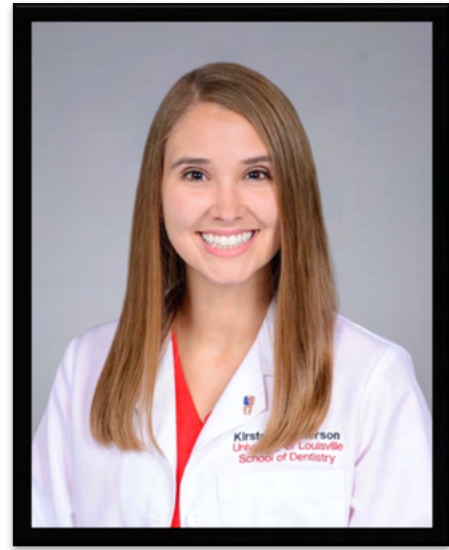
Welcome back, ULSD!

Reflecting on this past year behind us I can't help but to be so extremely grateful for where we are standing today as a student body, school, and community. As we navigate all the changes this past year has brought, I am hopeful for this next year to keep growing and strengthening our school. It is my greatest honor to serve as the student body president during this exciting time and to see the improvements and strides being made in all areas of our school every day. It's a great time to be at ULSD!

I'd like to give a special welcome to the incoming Class of 2025 - these will be the most challenging and rewarding 4 years of your life. Make sure to lean on each other, the upperclassmen, and your professors, and to soak up all the fun memories these next years will offer you! To the D2's, don't be too hard on yourself this next year. It will be challenging, but you will make it through. Know we are all rooting for you and are always here when you need us! To my fellow D3's, I can't believe we are already halfway done! These days are fleeting and all too soon we will be crossing the finish line, so don't forget to enjoy the journey as we continue to grow and learn. And to our wonderful D4's, it's been a long 4 years and I know you all are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. We are so proud of you and all you've accomplished, and we look up to you all in so many ways. Keep fighting the good fight - you've almost made it and will be amazing dentists! And to all our faculty and staff, we are so grateful for the ways you strive to make ULSD a better school and community. Your hard work does not go unnoticed, and we are excited to continue achieving great things as a community this year. I am looking forward to another wonderful year of learning, growth, and fun with each and every one of you. Go Cards!

Yours in leadership,

Kirsten Peterson  
Class of 2023



**Kirsten Peterson**  
**Class of 2023**



# In Memory of Kavya Balaji



Kavya Priya Balaji passed away on June 5, 2021. She was a 4<sup>th</sup> year dental student from Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Kavya cherished her family and friends, but the most important people in her life were her parents. She adored them and wanted nothing more than to make them proud. Kavya's boyfriend was a very important constant in her life as well. She had many friends & family members in Bowling Green, Louisville, and others scattered across the world.

Kavya was driven, dedicated, and motivated with every goal she set. She loved being involved in the school and community. She was active in many organizations/clubs at the school including LASDA, AO, and the club she created, the Pediatric Dental Club. She spent all her free time volunteering and shadowing at pediatric dental clinics. Her love for children drove her dream to be a pediatric dentist. She had almost finished her residency applications.

Most of all, Kavya was the greatest friend, an extraordinary person—beautiful inside and out. She was known and loved by so many for her kindness, willingness to help, and infectious personality. Kavya's personality was sassy, funny, and sarcastic. She was serious when necessary but joked around most of the time.

Nothing written about Kavya will ever do her character justice. We are all blessed to have known and loved Kavya. Even though she is not physically here, she is with us in spirit. Rest in peace, Kavya.



# SOCIAL

Alex Wolfe  
Class of 2024

## Back in Action

Gillian Casey  
Class of 2023

Taylor Smith  
Class of 2024

The LASDA social chairs are extremely excited to get this year going with our ability to resume school social events once again! While still taking all the proper COVID-19 precautions that are put in place by the CDC and our institution, we look forward to welcoming all members to our many planned events.

Back in June, we kicked things off with a schoolwide LASDA lunch event provided by Maira Mediterranean Grill and Comfy Cow Ice Cream in order to welcome all students to our brand new picnic tables located outside on the second floor! It was so refreshing to finally gather outside and enjoy a free lunch alongside our classmates. Next up was the free Louisville Bats baseball game, conveniently planned for Thursday night – AKA \$2 chicken tender & fry baskets and beers! Students from all classes came out to enjoy a nice summer night under the stadium lights, go Bats! Come August 30<sup>th</sup>, we held our D1 Welcome Mixer at BBC Four Roses Bourbon Barrel Loft where D1s had the opportunity to come out and get to know their classmates a little better outside of the hustle and bustle of a busy first month. We loved seeing so many new faces and hope to continue to meet more and more of our hardworking first years! In addition, this fall there have been several LASDA meet-ups at local bars/breweries, our karaoke night at Noraebars open to all dental students, Twilight Thursday at Churchill Downs, and LASDA tailgates for UofL football games. Go Cards!

We have so much more planned for the months ahead including our Cusp of Carabelli coming November 12<sup>th</sup> to an O'shea's near you, and be sure to mark those calendars for March 12<sup>th</sup> as LASDA will be presenting our very formal Odontoball held at Churchill Downs – picture this: you're dressed to the nines, your date on your arm (or your BFF squad who is ready to dance the night away), and you walk through the legendary gates of Churchill Downs alongside your classmates to have the night of your life. Ladies, start picking out those evening gowns and gentleman, let's see that black-tie attire. We're working hard to make this the most memorable night of the year, and we won't let you down!

LASDA looks forward to seeing you at all our events, and as always, if you have any suggestions of what you'd like to see from us next, please never hesitate to reach out. We want to make this dental school journey a memorable one for all our members. See you real soon!

Your LASDA Social Chairs –  
Gillian Casey (D3), Taylor Smith (D2), and Alex Wolfe (D2)





# ADVOCACY

## Why Should You Care?

When dental students are met with the term “advocacy,” the idea of politics may be the first to pop into their minds. However, advocacy for the dental professional should mean pushing for what you believe is right. The law will continue to control what we can do as dentists, so why not advocate for policies that will benefit your profession and patients? Every dental student should feel passionate about their career as we have crossed so many bridges to get where we are today.

What can we as dental students do in terms of advocacy? Firstly, it is crucial to become aware of the American Student Dental Association’s current legislative priorities. Right now, ASDA is pushing for student debt reform, addressing midlevel providers, reducing barriers to care for patients, licensure reform, and vaccinations. ASDA was created for dental students and their priorities should be for the betterment of our profession. Recently, ASDA broke through in its grassroots efforts to push for non-patient-based licensure exams during the pandemic. This allowed students to complete their board examination on a mannikin. This greatly reduced the stress of a no-show patient on your board exam day.

Secondly, we must put our voices out there to be heard. The *ASDA Advocacy Brief* e-newsletter comes out every month, and it’s an excellent way to stay current on dental-related legislation and issues in Washington D.C. and the states. When there is an important bill on the table, ASDA will provide you with a direct link where you can email your representative in support/against the current legislature. We must show that we care and believe or else who will?







November is advocacy month which means that throughout the entire month there will be many opportunities to learn about what advocacy means for the dental student. This is the time to ask yourself, which aspect of dentistry are you truly passionate in? It’s never too late to become informed and reform the field of dentistry for the better.




**HeeJue Hong**  
Class of 2023

### ASDA ADVOCACY

*then to now*

- 1970**  
  
SADA (Student American Dental Association) is created.
- 1971**  
  
ASDA is formally created during the ADA convention of February 1971.
- 1986**  
  
PEN (Political Education Network) is created.
- 1999**  
  
ASDA and ADEA host the first National Dental Student Lobby Day.
- 2016**  
  
ASDA releases L-1 white paper on dental licensure.
- TODAY**  
  
States adopt alternative pathways to dental licensure.



# ALUM SPOTLIGHT



**Dr. Taylor Ruby**  
**Class of 2020**

Hello there! My name is Taylor Ruby, and I'm a 27-year-old, 2020 graduate of ULSD from Somerset, KY. I am married and have two little boys - Wesley & Reid. We also have two Golden Retrievers - Riley & Banks. I completed my undergraduate degree at Western Kentucky University ('16) with degrees in Biology & Chemistry.

During my time at ULSD I was able to serve as my class' Vice President and was also a student leader of Christian Medical Dental Association. During my time at ULSD, I was given the opportunity to serve internationally on two dental mission trips. I was able to travel to both Ecuador & Jamaica to provide dentistry and spread the Gospel to those in need of dental care and the love of Jesus Christ. In addition, ULSD gave me the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. to lobby on behalf of dentists across the U.S.

Currently I am practicing in my hometown at Southern Dental Group in Somerset, KY. My partner, Dr. Michael Pope, was my wife's dentist growing up and a good family friend. While in dental school, we became connected, and I began shadowing on any break I had from school. It was during these days shadowing I noticed his commitment to quality, compassionate dentistry. Dr. Pope is a graduate of the Dawson Academy and the AACD and has a passion for restoring people's smiles in a predictable and sustainable manner. It was this style of dentistry that really drew me to his practice. The best thing about working with him is that he is not only a great career mentor, but he's also a great life and spiritual mentor for me.

The past year has been a roller coaster, with the waves of COVID-19 dictating our schedule. As COVID-19 ramped up, our schedule would go through slumps. As stimulus checks rolled out and people got vaccinated, people started coming out of the woodwork for dental care and kept us busy, fortunately. Although it's been a tough first year to begin my career, I have loved getting to know and serve my patients - many of whom were my teachers, doctors, coaches, etc. from childhood. One area I have really fallen in love with is doing quality crown & bridge work for my patients. I'm also really excited to begin placing implants starting this November.

My advice to current students is to not be afraid in school of asking a question, making a mistake, or putting yourself out there to learn as much as you can. For example, if you're sitting in Oral Surgery and Crystal walks into the bullpen saying, "I got a broken #19, who wants it?" Don't tuck your tail between your legs and shy away. Step up and learn how to take out the difficult teeth. School is the time to learn as much as you can, make mistakes, and pack in as much experience as you can get in 4 short years.

I know as you're reading this it seems like dental school will be an eternity, but I promise it goes by too fast. One day you're in the trenches trying to dodge the bullets that Bernstein & Firriolo are trying to murder you with, the next you're a practicing dentist living states away from some of the best friends you'll ever make. Cherish each day with your classmates & friends. Appreciate the opportunity you've been given to improve the lives of others. Never stop learning.

Taylor Ruby  
ULSD '20

# STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER UNVEILED



**Jake Fooks  
Class of 2022**

Our dental school has seen many changes over the past decade with millions of dollars being spent on renovating our facilities to create an environment to help ULSD students reach their full potential, but nothing brings the members of Louisville ASDA more pride than the addition of our new Student Success and Wellness Center. The creation of this facility was born from the efforts of many student leaders who spent years developing a combined vision for a place where students can learn and thrive. Nothing about the process was easy, but when the leaders of LASDA recognized an opportunity to enhance the lives of their fellow classmates, they were resolved to make that happen.

In the past, LASDA had received input from students wishing to have a study space inside the dental school because at that time the only place dental students could study on campus was across the street at Kornhauser Library. In 2019, LASDA President Alex Stewart, Vice President Nick English, and Treasurer Rupika Narain took action and began working out the logistics of how a space like that could be created. The first step in the project was to find adequate space within the school where the study space could exist. This was no easy task as the space at ULSD is highly utilized for various staff and research purposes, but after months of meetings with Dean Bradley and our Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, Dianne Foster, a space was found in an ideal location just adjacent to our prior student lounge. The next step was to procure funding. In the spring of 2020 our LASDA executives utilized their positions in SGA to gain funding that could be put towards the project.

Just as everything was coming together, the Covid-19 pandemic changed everything and put the project on hold. When newly elected LASDA President Jake Fooks and Vice President Grant Berry came into office there was plenty of work that needed to be done to revive the project and get things back on track. In the fall of 2020, hosting our chapters traditional social events was





focus the bulk of their energy on making this student center the best it could be. In order to maximize the project's potential, they came up with an idea to procure more funding by bringing in a sponsor. Over the course of several meetings with our newly appointed Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Alma Tukacovic, Assistant Director of Student Affairs, Audra French, and other university leaders, a donor was identified. We then began moving forward with

the space as a result of a substantial increase in our project budget. Throughout the fall and early spring, LASDA leaders helped make decisions on every aspect of the design and function of the student center. A new floor plan was developed to combine the study room with our existing student lounge, and by including the student lounge in our plans for the renovation, a uniform color scheme and esthetic was established. Custom furniture was designed for the space with the goal of optimizing function for students studying in both our group and solo study spaces.

Construction took place throughout the summer of 2021, and the project was unveiled to ULSD students at a ribbon cutting ceremony on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Student Success and Wellness Center was dedicated to Dr. Wood E. Currens, a past dean at ULSD. The ceremony was attended by Dean Currens as well as the McGuinn family whose donation made the construction of the space possible.

The Wood E. Currens Student Success and Wellness Center is now a highlight of student life at ULSD that will benefit students for years to come. Its development is a testament to the value that our school's

administration, alumni, and student leaders share for the success and wellness of the student body. Our collaboration displays the altruistic nature that is ingrained in all of us that call the University of Louisville School of Dentistry home.



# ADVANCED STANDING PROGRAM

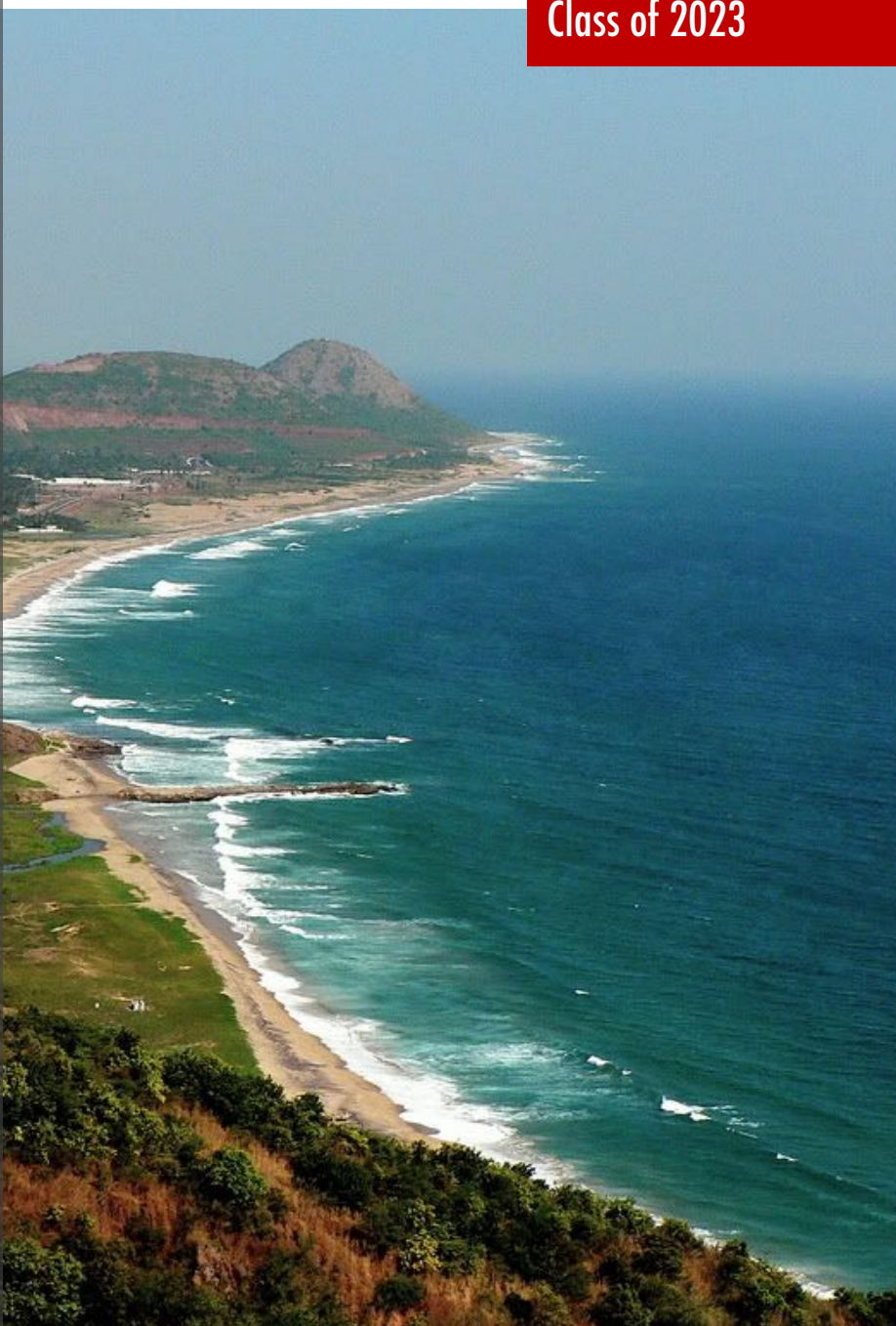


**Rohit Vadlamani**  
Class of 2023

Hi everyone! My name is Rohit Vadlamani. I am currently a D3 student at the University of Louisville School of Dentistry as part of the Advanced Standing Program (ASP). ASP is an accelerated dental program for foreign-trained dentists to work towards dental licensure and practice in the United States.

I was born and raised in Visakhapatnam (Vizag) – a coastal city in the southern part of India. Most of my memories are associated with this city: first date, first break-up, first bike, a first accident...I can just keep going on and on. I completed a majority of my schooling here – from kindergarten to my Bachelor's in Dental Surgery (BDS). One interesting fact about completing dental school in India is that we begin right after we complete high school!

Dental programs back in India are typically 5 years in length – 4 years of dental school and 1 year of internship where we practice as an in-house doctor while rotating through different specialties. The last year of the program provided insight into the life of a graduate specialty while working as a general dentist. Our dental school was in a coastal city, so a majority of the patient population we treated were fishermen and rural individuals. It was common to see many of these patients with pathologies – including reverse smoking and oral submucosal fibrosis. After I finished dental school in Vizag, I decided to come to the United States to further my education. I completed my graduate studies and earned a Master's of Science in Oral Biology at UofL.





It was a huge culture shock once I moved to the United States – a new country with differing cultures, languages, seasons, and even driving conditions. I was not used to driving on the right side of the roads here. I can still remember the first time I woke up to snow fall; it felt as if I slept in one world and woke up in another! Yet, I believe that this was the best decision of my life. The program gave me the liberty to pick the area of research I wanted to explore. I chose to work with Dr. William Scarfe (from the ULSD Oral Radiology Department) on the applications of artificial intelligence in dentistry. We collaborated with Denti.AI, a company exploring machine learning technology to detect caries in digital radiographic images. This graduate school journey of two years was a steep learning curve for me, but I was able to pursue research in an area I love, in a new country, and meet new people!

When I started my first semester as an advanced standing student, I was quite nervous, but I was happy to see how kind and helpful my classmates are. At first, it seemed that it was the worst time to join the class – we were taking oral pathology, an intense treatment planning course, and had so many projects to complete. It was crazy! However, I and the other advanced standing students never felt alone or lost. I am glad about my decision to come to the US and deepen my education in dentistry. Though it has been a challenging road, what is life without obstacles? I'm excited to see where this journey will take me and what lies ahead for me as a future dentist in America!

# CLEAN UP DOWNTOWN

## It's Really Just Trash



Judd Burns  
Class of 2024



At least for me, the hardest part of beginning a dental school career during the now-earlier days of the Covid-19 pandemic was the inability to meet in person with many of my classmates outside of class. That's why I decided to apply to be on LASDA's D1 Leadership Track (DLT), whose members look for ways that they can engage their classmates in bettering ULSD and the community around us through service, outreach, and events. Again, this was challenging for a group of students who had nearly all their classes remotely and couldn't meet indoors in groups. Since the DLT group couldn't meet in person either, I was a little discouraged at first that our group wasn't going to be able to really do anything, but it wasn't just the D1s having this issue. In fact, the pandemic essentially ground all the extracurricular school events to a halt.

Therefore, during one of our DLT meetings, we decided to brainstorm ways that we could safely meet in person and without breaching either the CDC or ULSD coronavirus safety guidelines. I mentioned that I'd noticed there was a whole lot of trash along the sidewalks from the street where I park my car and walk to campus, and the idea was suggested to meet on a Saturday to pick up trash outside. To stay safe, we could wear gloves and masks, limit the number of participants to five or six, and use trash grabbers the entire time. True to its name, the D1 Leadership Track did not disappoint with several members who jumped at the opportunity for a service engagement. The six of us met on a Saturday and filled at least eight trash bags, but there was so much more we just couldn't get. Would our efforts that day even make a dent, especially if there wasn't a regular clean-up initiative in the area?



Sam, a fellow DLT member who participated in our first clean-up day, was similarly interested in continuing our trash pick-ups in a more periodic way, and said I should present this idea to our ULSD service coordinator Mrs. Drury as an idea for community service credit. With this suggestion and a lot of help from LASDA's community service chairs, Steph Dawson and Chad Hartley, I organized and proposed the Clean-Up Downtown initiative to Mrs. Drury, who was very receptive to the idea and forwarded it along through administrative channels for approval! At the time we could have up to ten people gathered outside together, so I created a sign-up list that allowed ULSD students – from all classes, not just D1s – to choose what day and times worked for them to come and help out. Particularly since the D1 class had yet to meet many D3s and D4s due to our limited campus time, Clean-Up Downtown served as a great way to help brighten up a small stretch of the Louisville Metro community (where we all spend so much time) while also helping D1s meet more classmates along the way.

Clean-Up Downtown was one of the few approved, in-person service activities available to ULSD students in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. There were six clean-up sessions in total for the Spring 2021 semester with over fifty ULSD students participating throughout the term. From that small idea of picking up trash, I'm happy and proud to say that Clean-Up Downtown has continued into this school year, and I encourage and challenge each and every one of you to consider signing up for one of the pick-up days. Sometimes, making a difference is as easy as wanting to see a little less garbage instead of just tuning it out on your walk to school.



# HEALTHY BITES



Taylor Ranallo  
Class of 2024

## Black Bean Burgers

### Ingredients

- 2 (14 oz) cans black beans, drained, rinsed, and patted dry
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ¾ cup finely chopped bell pepper
- 1 cup finely chopped yellow onion
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 ½ tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp chili powder
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp smoked paprika
- ½ cup breadcrumbs or oat flour
- ½ cup feta cheese
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tbsp ketchup, mayo, or BBQ sauce
- Pinch of salt and pepper

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Spread beans evenly onto a lined baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes until slightly dried out.
2. Meanwhile sauté olive oil, chopped pepper, onion, and garlic over medium heat until peppers and onions are soft, about 5-6 minutes. Gently blot some of the moisture out. Place in a large bowl or in a food processor with the remaining ingredients (cumin, chili powder, garlic powder, smoked paprika, breadcrumbs, cheese, eggs, Worcestershire sauce, ketchup, salt, and pepper). Stir or pulse everything together, then add the black beans. Mash with a fork or pulse the mixture, leaving some larger chunks of beans.
3. Form into patties – about 1/3 cup of mixture in each.
4. To bake: Place patties on a parchment paper lined baking sheet and bake at 375°F for 10 minutes on each side, 20 minutes total.  
To grill: Place patties on greased aluminum foil and grill 8 minutes on each side. Heat temperature is personal preference as all grills differ. Generally, black bean burgers should grill on medium-high heat about 350°F-400°F.
5. Serve with your favorite toppings. Store leftovers in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.



# STUDENT FEATURES

# D1 FEATURE

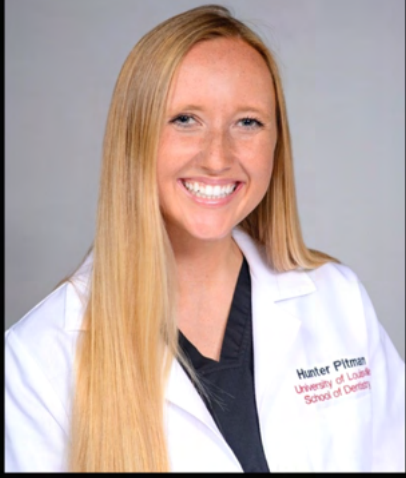
My father has always reminded me of a saying that is cliché to most but one that I hear each time I'm met with a tough decision—"stay true to your heart". This was no different when choosing where I would chart my path for the next four years in dental school—my heart was undeniably telling me Louisville. From the moment I stepped foot on campus for a ULSD workshop, I was immediately blown away by the exuberating passion, the drive for success, and the genuine camaraderie that ULSD faculty and students displayed. It was this kind of atmosphere that I was naturally attracted to and confident would mold me into a knowledgeable, skilled, and competent dentist. Through other experiences on campus, it became even more evident that ULSD is set apart from other dental schools. I perceived how the curriculum is constantly being revised to adequately prepare students for the integrated boards. I observed how faculty intentionally care about each student's success. I noticed how professors consistently remembered small details about our conversations, intentionally reached out, and made me feel overly welcome—even as an undergraduate student. I couldn't help but imagine how amplified this sense of belonging would be as a dental student. When the time came to choose where I would attend dental school, even though my close friends were going elsewhere, I was quick to heed my father's advice and stay true to my heart.

Although beginning a new chapter, moving to a new city, and starting professional school can initially seem very daunting, it is also marked by new opportunities, friends, and experiences that will allow us to grow into the professionals needed to serve our communities as general dentists. For me, what I'm most looking forward to in dental school is to be surrounded by like-minded individuals that have the same drive for success and heart for people as myself. I am thrilled for the opportunity to learn challenging curriculum and to be mentored by esteemed faculty, but I am also just as excited to do life with each of my classmates and to develop deeper relationships with 119 talented individuals.



**Caroline Reed**  
**Class of 2025**

# D2 FEATURE



**Hunter Pitman**  
**Class of 2024**

## **What has been your favorite part of dental school?**

My favorite part of dental school is the friends that come with it! Learning alongside friends makes it that much better. Not a day goes by that I don't learn something new, whether it is from a book, faculty, another student, or myself messing up first.

## **What has been your biggest challenge?**

My biggest challenge has been adjusting to the course load on top of learning hand skills which is a whole other challenge. Balancing the course load but still prioritizing time for outside commitments was an adjustment.

## **What organizations have you been involved in at the school?**

I am involved in LASDA, AAWD and CMDA. Last year I was one of the two LASDA class representatives alongside my classmate Judd Burns. This year I am serving as one of the pre-dental chairs in LASDA.

## **What did you do prior to dental school?**

Prior to dental school, I attended Susquehanna University and played field hockey there! While at Susquehanna, I had the chance to study abroad in Barcelona, Spain for a semester which allowed me learn more about other cultures. I also worked as a dental assistant for a summer where I was introduced to hands on dentistry.

## **If you could go back in time, what would you tell yourself on the first day of dental school?**

I would tell myself do not compare yourself to other students. Surround yourself with strong community because dental school is challenging, and it is much more feasible and enjoyable when you walk alongside friends who are going through the same thing as you!

## **What's your favorite thing to do outside of school?**

I love to spend intentional time with my community! I am involved in different Bible studies, and I really protect that time each week. I also love to travel, be outside, and workout.

# D3 FEATURE

I still so vividly remember being an undergraduate student sitting in on various workshops and student panels doing all that I could to prepare for the rigorous years ahead of me as a student at the University of Louisville School of Dentistry. I remember being told to budget tightly! For every dollar spent on loan money is three times that in the payback. I remember being told to turn down wedding invitations and sit out on the upcoming family reunions for there will be no time in our schedules to make these trips. And of course, I remember the infamous firehose analogy: for dental school is doing your best to keep up with a firehose amount of new knowledge you'll intake every day.

While I appreciated every tidbit of advice I could get, I often came away from these sessions afraid and overwhelmed. And of course, I carried this anxiety with me into my first semester as a D1. Within the first two weeks of starting school, I developed insomnia, considering myself lucky to have gotten 3 hours of sleep before taking exams, and often feeling that I was a danger to others while driving on the road. I developed pesky eye twitches that would last for weeks at a time. Prescription sleeping medications couldn't even shake the fear to allow me time to rest. Therefore, I continued on, exhaustedly, for months until finally it dawned on me that it was the *anticipation* of how horrible school was that was keeping me on edge.

So, my advice to others starting off nervous and afraid is to take the scary stories with a grain of salt. It's so easy to focus on the negative aspects of dental school in the moment, and we often forget about all the good that has come from our time in school. When, though it has been hard, many of my greatest memories have come from my time in dental school – no one prepared me for the lifelong friends and impactful lessons that were going to come from my short time at ULSD. So, here's to speaking out about all the *fun*.



**Stephanie Russell**  
**Class of 2023**

# D4 FEATURE



**Taylor Walker-Smith**  
**Class of 2022**

## **What has been your favorite part of dental school?**

My favorite part of dental school is definitely building relationships! I love getting to know all my patients and working with them to create a treatment plan uniquely just for them. I want my patients to know they're in a safe space where they can be open with no fear of judgment. I also enjoy building friendships with my faculty members. So many of them love to share tips and tricks they've learned through their career! I feel that several ULSD faculty members are excited to teach and were MADE to be in education. I appreciate them so much for all their help over the years!

## **What has been your biggest challenge?**

For me, the biggest challenge was getting through the basic science classes and relating them to the field of dentistry. For some classes, like anatomy, it was super easy to see the correlation. We were learning about cranial nerves and focusing in on the structures in the head and neck. However, for classes like biochemistry, it was significantly harder for me to make those connections to concepts I'd be using every day in the clinic.

## **What organizations have you been involved in at the school?**

In my first few years, I was involved in HSDA and SNDA. Throughout all 4 years, I've been involved in LASDA and ADEA. During my time in LASDA, I've been Pre-Dental Chair, Cardinal Initiative Director, and Class Representative. This year in ADEA, I'm the Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Council. Within these positions, my goal was to create positive change throughout the school!

## **What's your future goal with dentistry?**

I plan to go straight to work after graduating in May! I'd love to be in a bigger city, working with a more diverse population. As a leader within the community, I want to work to improve oral health education as well as advocate for policy change regarding healthcare in general. Ideally, I'd like to get involved more with public health!

## **What did you do prior to dental school?**

Once I graduated high school, I stayed in my hometown (Danville, KY) to attend Centre College for undergrad. I was always interested in the sciences, building relationships with others, giving back, and becoming a lifelong learner. All of those things I found in dentistry, which lead me to applying to dental school!



## 2021-2022 Leadership

**President** – Kirsten Peterson

**Vice President** – Chandler Unfried

**Treasurer** – Grant Berry

**Legislative Liaison** – HeeJue Hong

**Secretary** – Macie Berry

**District 7 Officers** – Judd Burns, Alizey Ayesha

**Immediate Past President** – Jake Fooks

**Community Outreach** – Brandi Hall, April Johnson

**Pre-Dental** – Jillian Jones, Hunter Pitman

**Alumni Relations** – Andrew Way

**Advanced Standing Student Representative** – Rohit Vadlamani

**Wellness** – Courtney Day, Ellie MacLeod

**RaiseRED** – Madison Chumbler, Colin Cummings

**Cardinal Initiative** – Judd Burns, Brianna Gill

**Dental Hygiene Representative** – Olivia Bass

**Fundraising** – Chaney Brown, Becca Miller

**Membership** – Caylin Levin, Jordan Noble

**Social** – Gillian Casey, Taylor Smith, Alex Wolfe

**Community Service** – Stephanie Dawson, Stuart Mills

**Social Media** – Deepa Gadde, Tamara Kapetanovic

**D1 Class Representative** – Kathleen Connelly, Noah Connolly

**D2 Class Representative** – Meghan Nay

**D3 Class Representative** – Stephanie Russell

**D4 Class Representative** – Taylor Walker-Smith

**Student Engagement** – Michelle Moure, Virginia Dunlap

**Newsletter** – Morgan Holt

**Photo/Video** – Sarika Polcum



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