LLUSD
STUDENT RESEARCH GROUP NEWSLETTER
SUMMER 2013

LLUSRG Officers from left to right: Brandon Soelberg (SD’16, Public Relations), Marriane Demirdji (SD’16, Secretary), Erica Becker (SD’15, Councilor), Daniel Shaw (SD’15, Councilor), Dr. Li (CDR Director), Dr. Oyoyo (Faculty Advisor), Daniel Yang (SD’14, President) Elijah Wang, (SD’14, Co-Vice President) Matthew Enns (SD’14, Co-Vice President)

NSRG REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE APPOINTMENT

Congratulations to Marriane Demirdji (SD’16), on being selected by the AADR NSRG Board of Directors as the Regional Representative for the Pacific Region. During her one-year term, she will facilitate communication between local student research groups and the National Student Research Group, the student branch of the American Association of Dental Research. Her duties include distributing and promoting AADR/NSRG activities such as awards, poster sessions, meetings, and events, as well as promoting the formation of new local student research groups. Schools in the pacific region include Loma Linda, USC, UCLA, UCSF, and Northwestern University.
The field of dentistry is a rapidly evolving division among the health sciences. One of the reasons for its ability to quickly develop cutting edge technologies and practices is the strong supporting background of research. A vital method that demonstrates how evidence-based dentistry is propelled forward is through the process of peer evaluation and the distribution of knowledge through the scientific and dental community. At the 2013 combined International and American Association of Dental Research (IADR/AADR) annual session in Seattle, the goal of education and research was central to the event. Although this was not my first time attending an AADR convention, the amount and scope of information presented did not cease to amaze me. Hundreds of posters were available for viewing on the convention floor throughout the duration of the meeting, while plenary sessions, lectures, seminars, and networking events were simultaneously scheduled for attendants looking to gain more experience in various fields of dentistry and research. As a lucky recipient of the 2013 AADR Bloc Travel Grant, I was privileged to attend the IADR/AADR convention with a stipend designed to relieve financial burdens associated with travel and registration costs.

Among the plethora of meetings and seminars that were scheduled throughout the four days at the convention, one of my favorite events was attending the poster presentation sessions. The scope of research that the posters covered was amazing, and the succinct method of communicating research goals, methods, and findings was integral in quickly enhancing my knowledge about an encompassing range of subjects. Particular topics that intrigued me – such as dentofacial orthognathics and orthodontics – granted me the ability to delve deeper into specific research projects. This opportunity allowed me to expand my knowledge on current and cutting edge technology and methodology.

Along with the dental knowledge presented at the poster sessions, the ability to rapidly network among peers and mentors was another invaluable aspect of attending the conference. It is said that wisdom and knowledge are social properties, and that teamwork and communication are key to progress. This was never more apparent than at the IADR/AADR conference. I had the opportunity to attend the NSRG student-mentor breakfast where I was able to meet and discuss many pertinent topics to student research across the nation.

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Through group discussions, we were able to address questions like “how to enhance student research opportunities,” and share different methods that NSRG chapters were taking to approach student research. One of the chapters presented the novel approach of encouraging and engaging predental students to be involved with dental research, thereby enhancing incoming dental student’s exposure to dentistry along with the process of doing research. Even with the most innovative research ideas, however, various legal and financial restrictions must be navigated before research can actually take place. At the conference, I was lucky to attend a sold out NIDCR seminar aimed at teaching grant writing – a vital aspect of initiating and maintaining research. This session was an incredibly helpful introduction into the complicated world of securing financing for research. This was an eye-opening experience in grasping the extensive planning that must take place when writing proposals for NIH consideration. The course was well presented and covered various parts of grant writing, from idea conception to methods of targeting specific audiences.

The 2013 AADR/IADR research convention was an amazing experience, combining extensive learning with fun networking events in beautiful downtown Seattle. Although research has sometimes been given the undeserved reputation of being tedious, research conventions like this are certain to reinvigorate and inspire any researcher, whether they are an accomplished veteran, or a budding neophyte.

-Elijah Wang, Class of 2014
With fresh poster in hand, we fumbled out of the car and made our way through the stream of well-dressed professionals being herded into the CDA convention. The previous night was a sleepless one, consisting of the type of last minute nervous scrambling that seemed just enough to faze us but not enough to prepare us. Brewing in our stomachs was the sort of feeling you get watching roller coasters whiz by, knowing that your turn is not too far off.

The woman at the registration kiosk pointed us to the far left corner of the convention center. We welcomed the familiar faces of our classmates, who appeared equally nervous and weary. Truly, misery does seek company. The coordinator of the table clinics briefed us on the rules, the schedule, and the dos and don’ts, which we followed religiously lest we get disqualified. A humble breakfast was prepared for us, but our appetites had shrunk dramatically after noticing the glass partitions that separated us from the vendors, and the occasional side glances of the attendees looking in.

We were delighted that our research project, The Effects of Radiation on Oral Mucosa, placed first in the Scientific Category. It was a great finish to a grueling day of repeatedly presenting our research to judges and curious passer-byes. To say that the honorary and monetary rewards were not a highlight of our day would be a lie, but one of the real treats of the CDA table clinics was meeting other students from different dental schools in California who were equally interested in research and leadership. It was only then that I realized the value of the research class in the LLUSD curriculum and the amazing mentors we work with.

The convention and table clinics were laid out like a checkerboards—boxes, squares, and pieces. Like checkers, there was a multitude of exchange and cross over. There was much intermingling, giving, and taking. We took pieces of experience from our colleagues while they took pieces of experience from us. We exchanged horror stories, tuition rants, research foibles, and personal lives. All in all, the day was filled with thoroughly enjoyable interactions that ended in hand shaking. The CDA table clinics were probably the single most poignant event that expanded my view of dental student life this year. We were refreshed to see a group of students excited about contributing to the tidal wave of dental information. We have made friends for life and career.

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To catch a wave, one must paddle in the direction of the wave before the wave breaks, allowing the surface tension of the water and the buoyancy of your board to propel you forward. Dental research is a similar beast. There is an immeasurable amount of information hurling itself in our direction. If students aren’t paddling forward with these little steps of research in hopes of riding this wave, the wave will consume them and leave them behind, drowned in misinformation, confusion, and non-evidence based dentistry. However, that is only half of the technique. We must also be buoyant, light, and open-minded to sound research—frankly, that is the only way to stay afloat and ride the wave.

-Eric Chen and Matthew Enns, Class of 2014

**1st place, Scientific Category**
Effects of Radiation Therapy on Oral Mucosa
*Eric Chen, Matt Enns*
Mentor: *Dr. Mei Lu*

**2nd place, Scientific Category**
Depth of Fluoride Penetration through Glass Ionomer
*Tod Davidson, James Gordon*
Mentor: *Dr. Brian Novy*

**1st Place, Community Category**
Comparing Variability Among Graders Using Traditional and Digital Grading Methods: A Pilot Study
*Clint Walker, Amanda Zenthoefer, Zachary Mursic, Caprice Hunter, Crismon Goude*
Mentor: *Dr. John Won*

**2nd Place, Community Category**
Evaluation of a Novel Interaction Model for Educating Dental Students on the Basic Principles of Exodontia
*Daniel Yang, Elijah Wang, Douglas Baasch*
Mentor: *Dr. Mei Lu*

**2nd place, Clinical Category**
The Diagnostic Quality of CBCT Images in the Presence of Common Orthodontic Brackets
*Charles Towes, Jillian Carlton, Skyler Liatti*
Mentor: *Dr. Leroy Leggit*

**3rd place, Clinical Category**
Microbursting to Depress Bacterial Load
*Andre Soumekh, BreeAnn Christiansen, Fallon Livingston, Ruthanna Lee, Katie Waldron*
Mentor: *Dr. Brian Novy*